

Dialogue for peace and solidarity: pathway to economic sustainability in Nigeria

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**DIALOGUE FOR PEACE AND SOLIDARITY:
Pathway to Economic Sustainability in Nigeria**

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Thesis
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABP	<i>Anchor Borrowers' Program</i>
AIPBF	<i>Abuja Interfaith Peace-Building Forum</i>
APC	<i>All Progressive Congress</i>
ATR	<i>African Traditional Religion</i>
BPD	<i>Barrels Per Day</i>
CAN	<i>Christian Association of Nigeria</i>
CBCN	<i>Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria</i>
CCC	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
CCCB	<i>Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops</i>
CON	<i>Commander of the Order of the Niger</i>
CST	<i>Catholic Social Teaching</i>
CU.M	<i>Cubic Meter</i>
EFCC	<i>Economic and Financial Crimes Commission</i>
ERGP	<i>Economic Recovery and Growth Plan</i>
FABC	<i>Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences</i>
FDIs	<i>Foreign Direct Investments</i>
GDP	<i>Gross Domestic Product</i>
HDI	<i>Human Development Index</i>
MDGs	<i>Millennium Development Goals</i>
NIREC	<i>Nigeria Inter-Religious Council</i>
NIRSAL	<i>Nigeria Incentive-based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending</i>
NNPC	<i>Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation</i>

NSCIA	<i>Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs</i>
NTR	<i>Nigerian Traditional Religion</i>
OPC	<i>Oodua People's Congress</i>
PDP	<i>People's Democratic Party</i>
SAP	<i>Structural Adjustment Program</i>
SDGs	<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>
UK	<i>United Kingdom</i>
UN	<i>United Nations</i>
USA	<i>United States of America</i>
USD	<i>United States Dollars</i>
WFN	<i>Women of Faith Network</i>

Introduction

Nigeria is a complex and interesting country. In many ways, it is a country that can be described in paradoxical superlatives. A country so blessed and yet, blighted. A country with overflowing wealth, yet, riddled with overwhelming poverty. A nation that produces millions of barrels of crude oil, yet its citizens keep vigils at gas stations. A nation that is home to the richest man in Africa,¹ and yet is the poverty capital of the world.² Home to over one hundred and ninety million (190,000,000) people,³ Nigeria is unarguably the most populous black nation on earth. It is the most populous country in Africa and the seventh largest nation in the world. Nigeria is also quite possibly Africa's largest economy today, with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) of \$1.121 trillion,⁴ constituting 71 percent of West Africa's GDP and 27 percent of the continent's GDP.⁵

In many ways, Nigeria can be described as a nation with great potential for economic sustainability. It is richly endowed with a vast array of natural resources and human capital. The country has massive reserves of natural gas, containing 5,627 billion cu.m of natural gas as of 2017, holding the largest reserve in Africa and the ninth largest gas reserve in the world.⁶ More recently, large deposits of gold have been discovered in some states in Nigeria, including, Kebbi, Zamfara, and Kaduna States.⁷ The mainstay of the Nigerian economy today is oil. It accounts for over 90% of the total export earnings.⁸ With a maximum crude oil production capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day (bpd), Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of oil and the sixth largest oil producing country in the

¹ "Africa's Billionaires," Forbes Africa's Billionaires 2018 ranking, accessed October 28, 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/africa-billionaires/list/#tab:overall>.

² Bukola Adebayo, "Nigeria Overtakes India in Extreme Poverty Ranking," *CNN News*, June 26, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/26/africa/nigeria-overtakes-india-extreme-poverty-intl/index.html>.

³ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption is Dangerous: The Story Behind the Headlines* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2018), xv.

⁴ John Gren, "Nigeria Retains Top Spot as Africa's Largest Economy," *All Africa*, February 2, 2019, <https://allafrica.com/stories/201902230003.html>.

⁵ Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvi.

⁶ "Natural Gas Reserves by Country," Index Mundi, accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.indexmundi.com/energy/?product=gas&graph=reserves&display=rank>.

⁷ Femi Asu, "Nigeria's first Gold Refinery to be completed June 2019," *Punch*, December 14, 2018, <https://punchng.com/nigerias-first-gold-refinery-to-be-completed-june-2019/>.

⁸ Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvii.

world.⁹ From the foregoing, it is a per se nota datum, that Nigeria is a country *planted beside the running stream*¹⁰ of wealth and abundance.

If anything, Nigeria has shown that economic prosperity is not ensured by an abundance of rich deposits of natural resources and human capital. While these are key indicators of economic potentials, the health of a country's economy cannot be solely gauged by them. Integral to genuine economic prosperity is the wellbeing of the people. It is little wonder then that when the potentials of Nigeria are juxtaposed with concrete socio-economic and demographic benchmarks - such as life expectancy, human development index (HDI), infant mortality, access to safe drinking water and availability of other social determinants of health - the result is depressingly enigmatic; a classic case of a stupendously rich country, with poor citizens.

Many Nigerians today live beneath the tragic reality of underdevelopment that prevents them from enjoying even meagre human flourishing. In spite of the enormous natural and human resources, many still wallow in abject poverty and misery, illness and disease, infant mortality, illiteracy, marginality and an abysmal inequality of income which leads to desperate competition for the crumbs that fall from the tables of the political *diveses*¹¹ of Nigeria.

Given the huge upside economic potentials of Nigeria, the questions that necessarily arise from these conditions are: why has the country continued to underperform economically both locally and globally? How does a country such as Nigeria have over 36% of its population living below the absolute poverty line of \$1.90 per day?¹² How can a country so often, and rightly, described as the giant of Africa become the poverty capital of the world? How can this colossal economic scandal be remedied? Simply put, how can Nigeria become economically sustainable? These questions are central to the task of this research: seeking for insights from Catholic social teaching (CST). There

⁹ "Oil Production," Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, accessed October 26, 2018, <http://www.nnpcgroup.com/nnpcbusiness/upstreamventures/oilproduction.aspx>.

¹⁰ Psalm 1: 3 (That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither-- whatever they do prospers)

¹¹ The name often associated with the rich man in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the Bible, (Luke 16:19-31).

¹² Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvii

are a number of reasons why Nigeria continues to be economically backward and unable to attain economic sustainability.

This thesis argues that egocentrism and violent conflicts are two major evils that continue to perpetuate Nigeria's economic woes. Nigeria cannot achieve its destined developmental goal of sustainability if both the leaders and the populace do not turn the diversity of the country into assets for economic development. They must work to reconcile the ethno-religious divides that have continued to be cogs in the wheel of national integration and economic progress. Leaders must also shun all forms of egocentrism and be committed to the cause of all and sundry people in the society. Again, to become economically sustainable, Nigeria must invest not only in infrastructure, but ultimately in human and social capital through education in dialogue, peace and solidarity. Nigeria must also confront the structures and practices that daily plunge it into desperate socio-economic conditions. Catholic social teaching, through its enunciation on dialogue, peace and solidarity, provides great resources for achieving this vision of national integration and economic sustainability.

This thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter explores the question of economic substantiality in the Nigerian context. It will highlight the varying interplay of forces in terms of factors that are causal to Nigeria's perennial socio-economic predicaments. In the second chapter we shall establish the theological foundation for economic sustainability in Nigeria, making a case for the Catholic social teaching on dialogue, peace and solidarity as imperatives for integral development. The third and final chapter will demonstrate in concrete ways how CST, through its enunciation on dialogue, peace and solidarity can attend to sustainability in Nigeria.

Chapter One

Economic Sustainability and the Nigerian Context

I. Conceptualization

It is important to begin with the clarification of two concepts that could have multiple definitions and that are central to a proper appreciation of the subject matter of this thesis: Sustainability and Development.

A. Sustainability

The notion of sustainability focuses on a wide range of subjects and disciplines, from economic development, social development, to environmental protection. The term “sustainability” made its debut in global policy discuss and into academic lexicon in 1987 with the United Nations (UN) report titled *Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development*.¹³ This report is also known as the Brundtland Commission, named after its chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland, former prime minister of Norway.¹⁴ The Brundtland Commission articulates the concept of sustainability within the framework of sustainable development which it defines as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”¹⁵ While the UN rendition touches upon a variety of issues such as social, economic, ecological and even ethical, in this thesis, the term is reserved strictly from the point of view of the economy. Sustainability in this sense focuses on a “broad array of efforts to maintain social conditions and economic and human well-being.”¹⁶ Economic sustainability in Nigeria today therefore, would be used to mean the ability of Nigeria to utilize the rich and varied

¹³ Christiana Z. Peppard, and Andrea Vicini, eds. *Just Sustainability: Technology, Ecology, and Resource Extraction* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015), 1.

¹⁴ Kent E. Portney, *Sustainability* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Mass Institute of Technology, 2015), 22.

¹⁵ Paulinus Odozor I. C.S.Sp, "Truly Africa, and Wealthy!: What Africa Can Learn from Catholic Social Teaching about Sustainable Economic Prosperity." In *The True Wealth of Nations*, ed. Daniel K. Finn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 268.

¹⁶ Portney, *Sustainability*, 14.

potentials inherent in the country to provide for the well-being of the current population, but also in a way that does not compromise the human flourishing of future generations of Nigerians.

B. Development

The proper articulation of the concept of development is at the heart of the realization of development itself. Beginning from the pontificate of Paul VI, the concept of development has not only been more prevalent in Catholic social thought but has also acquired a more profound meaning. Paul VI insists that development cannot be circumscribed to economic growth alone, it must transcend this notion to one that touches the whole person, thus, development must be integral. *Populorum Progressio* teaches that to be genuine, development must foster the development of each person and of the whole person.¹⁷ Succinctly put, authentic development enables one to “seek to do more, know more and have more, in order to be more.”¹⁸ Pope Paul VI insists on an “integral” development, i.e, one which takes all aspects of the human person into cognizance, not just the economic.

While Pope Paul VI provided the denominators for a proper understanding of development, Pope John Paul II twenty years later, in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* uses these denominative propositions to accentuate such numerators of development as health, hygiene, life expectancy, availability of water, and other economic indicators.¹⁹ In sum, human development is central to any genuine economic development and any economic development that does not take into account the wellbeing of the people is deficient. Economic prosperity should be reflected in the wellbeing of the people and not simply in the number of factories and highways in the country. Therefore, I argue that economic sustainability is about genuine human development.

¹⁷ Paul VI, Encyclical on the Development of Peoples *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967) §14, at The Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html.

¹⁸ Ibid., 6.

¹⁹ John Paul II, Encyclical on the Social Concern of the Church *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987) § 14, at The Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html.

II. Nigerian Economy Today: The Paradoxes, Complexities and Potentials

A. A Concise History of Nigeria

It is important to state from the onset that Nigeria is a large, heterogenous country with an intricate history. The borders of the current geographical area designated as Nigeria were established in 1914 with the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates by the British colonial government. With the amalgamation of Nigeria, the British brought together what had previously been hundreds of autonomous, independent groups of people under the single administrative umbrella of the amalgamated Nigeria. However, the history of Nigeria predates the amalgamation of these different territories.

Prior to becoming a British colony, various tribes with different languages, cultural practices and institutions of governance existed separately. Among others, these tribes included the Nok people who resided in what is today called Middle Belt of Nigeria. The Nok kingdom dated back to around 900BCE and was known for its highly advanced judicial system with a hierarchy of courts.²⁰ The Oyo kingdom which occupied what is now known as the South East of Nigeria, was the most urbanized in the Sub-Saharan Africa before the nineteenth century. There were also the Benin Kingdom and the Ijaws. In the far south was the Igbo kingdom of Nri. It had a Priest-king system of governance with religious rather than political power.²¹ Adjacent to what is now known as the Republic of Niger were a succession of emirates that were made up of the Hausa -speaking people which today constitutes the northern part of Nigeria. Prominent among these emirates was the Sokoto Caliphate which was a well-structured and sophisticated Islamic State with different levels of officials.²²

Geographically, Nigeria stretches about 700 miles from west to east and about 650 miles from North to South, covering an area between 3° and 15° E longitude and between 4° and 14 °N

²⁰ John Campbell and Matthew Page, *Nigeria: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018), 19.

²¹ Ibid., 20.

²² Ibid., 20.

latitude. Nigeria is bordered to the south by the bight of Benin which is on the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic, and to the west by the Republic of Benin. On the North, the country is bordered by the republic of Niger and on the East by Cameroon. The Lake Chad separates Nigeria from Chad Republic from the extreme North-East region.²³

Politically, Nigeria is a fledgling democracy, with a federal system of government patterned after the American system. There are three arms of government, the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary. In principle, there is a separation of powers among the three arms of government, but, in reality, the executive continues to exert more influence over the rest of the arms of government. There are also three tiers of government with respective responsibilities: Federal, State and Local Governments. Nigeria is a multi-party nation with over fifty political parties. The two major political parties in the current political dispensation are the All Progressive Congress (APC), which is the current ruling party, and the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the opposition party. Currently, Nigeria has 36 States and its Federal Capital is in Abuja. These states are grouped into six geopolitical zones that include: North West, North Central, North East, South West, South East and South-South. There are 774 local government areas in Nigeria.

The sentiments of John Mbiti, an African philosopher and religionist, that Africa is “notoriously religious”²⁴ finds even greater expression in Nigeria. Nigeria is a deeply religious country. This reality is a near per se nota datum. Once you step out of the airplane in any airport in Nigeria, and step into any city, you are very likely to be welcomed by an avalanche of churches and mosques, and with loud speakers either calling for everyone to heed the gospel message of Christ or in praise of Allah, the beneficent and merciful. The two predominant religions in Nigeria are Islam and Christianity. Both Islam and Christianity share around an equal number of adherents. While the Northern Part of Nigeria is predominantly Muslim, the South is predominantly Christian. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity in Nigeria, the people that made up the various tribes and groups

²³ Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2.

²⁴ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Heinemann, 2006.), 1.

practiced what today we call African Traditional Religion (ATR). Today, adherents of ATR constitute only about 10 percent of the entire population of Nigeria.

It is important to note that religion has been the cause of varying forms and levels of conflicts in Nigeria. In the north, conflicts between adherents of Christianity and Islam are prevalent. This phenomenon was further entrenched by the emergence of the Boko Haram terrorist organization. In the South, while religious conflicts are not as prevalent, there are often violent clashes between the adherents of Christianity and African Traditional Religion. This form of conflict is often triggered by Christian fanatics who insist on forced conversion. Some Christian Prayer groups often burn down places of worship belonging to those whom they consider pagan, or idol worshippers.

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse society. Although the official language of Nigeria is English, the country has over 300 different ethno-linguistic groups, and over 250 different indigenous languages.²⁵ The three largest ethnic groups are Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa. All the ethnic groups have their unique local cultures which tie into the collective culture of the Nigerian society. Furthermore, Nigeria is a collectivistic society, with great value placed on solidarity, hospitality and communalism.

B. Nigerian Economy Today: Rich Country, Poor People

Nigeria is a nation with great potential for economic sustainability. However, as always, the road from potentiality to actuality is often paved with varying degrees, depths and forms of roadblocks. Therefore, although Nigeria is a rich country, its peoples are poor as its resources remain largely untapped, wasted, and misappropriated.

Due to the large size of the country and economy, it occupies a prominent position in West Africa, in Africa and in the World today. As earlier noted, Nigeria is unarguably, Africa's largest economy today, with an estimate GDP of \$1.121 trillion. Nigeria, according to World Bank estimate, is the twenty sixth largest economy in the World, constituting 71 percent of West Africa's

²⁵ Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 4.

GDP and 27 percent of the continent's GDP.²⁶

Prior to the discovery of oil in Nigeria, agriculture was the cornerstone of the nation's economy. Achievements of the period included the development of the value chains of commodities like cotton, rice and export crops like cocoa, palm oil and groundnuts. Although, the agricultural sector still remains a great source of revenue for the Nigerian economy, accounting for about 30 percent of the GDP,²⁷ attention has shifted to oil and natural gas. The agricultural sector can be grouped into four sub-sectors: Crop production, livestock, fishing and forestry. Agriculture accounts for more employment in Nigeria than all other sectors. However, it is still largely subsistent, and predominantly small-scale farming. Today, there are genuine efforts by the government to boost agriculture. Such initiatives as the Anchor Borrowers' Program (ABP) are geared towards stimulating massive food production country-wide, providing loans for subsistence farmers are yielding results. Another initiative is the Nigeria Incentive-based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL), a corporation of Nigeria's Central Bank, established to de-risk the sector and facilitate the flow of finance and investments into agriculture. The creation of NIRSAL was informed by the perennial aversion of banks to lend to agriculture due to perceived high risks. With NIRSAL, banks' risk exposures are mitigated by NIRSAL's Credit Risk Guarantees, encouraging them to take on more and more projects in the agrispace.

Nigeria is richly endowed with different types of solid minerals – from precious metals to various stones and industrial minerals. Some of the solid minerals are barites, bitumen, limestone, coal, tin, columbite, gold, silver, lead-zinc, gypsum, glass sands, and iron ore, among others.²⁸ Coal and tin were among the natural resources mined on a massive scale, with the former being used to generate electricity, power the rail network and meet the demands of regional and international markets; lead and zinc were a significant source of foreign exchange and Nigeria was the world's

²⁶ Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvi.

²⁷ Campbell and Page, *Nigeria*, 48.

²⁸ Kayode Adeoye, "Solid Minerals in Nigeria: An Overview (1)," *TheGuardian*, March 02, 2016, <https://guardian.ng/energy/solid-minerals-in-nigeria-an-overview-1/>.

largest exporter of columbite. Today, the mining industry has gone comatose and no longer attracts international interests. Consequently, it has made no significant impact on the country's GDP in recent years.

One of the sectors that has grossly underperformed in the Nigerian economy is the manufacturing sector. This sector has witnessed steady decline since its heydays in the 1980s. The manufacturing sector can be divided into some sub sectors, including agro-processing, comprising food, beverages and tobacco, light manufacturing, including textile and wood products, and resource processing - cement and basic metals. Currently, the manufacturing sector accounts for less than 10 percent of the GDP. The reason for the decline of the manufacturing sector is not far-fetched: poor power infrastructure is at the topmost rung of the ladder, followed by a host of other challenges such as a poor transportation system, bribery and corruption, mismanagement, red tape, high borrowing costs, erratic politics-induced economic policies, import bans and, more recently, growing foreign competition from countries such as China and India.

The service sector by far accounts for the largest share of GDP, contributing approximately 50 percent. This sector is key in Nigeria's realization of its goal of economic sustainability. In the last decade, the information technology, financial services, tourism, entertainment industry and telecommunications have performed admirably well and contributed to boosting the nation's economy.

The mainstay of the Nigerian economy today is the oil and natural gas sector, which accounts for about 90 percent of export earnings and over 70 per cent of government revenue.²⁹ The oil and gas sector can be divided into two sub-sectors: the upstream production of crude oil or natural gas (mostly for export) and the downstream activities, e.g., refineries and petrochemicals. The main pillar of the Nigerian economy is the upstream sector. With a maximum crude oil production capacity of 2.5 million barrels per day, Nigeria is Africa's largest producer of oil and the fifteenth

²⁹ Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvii.

largest in the world in 2016.³⁰ Nigeria has four refineries with combined installed capacity of 445,000 bpd. However, these refineries operate far below installed capacity resulting in the importation of over \$7.83 billion worth of refined petroleum products annually.³¹ With massive reserves of natural gas, containing 5,627 billion cu.m of natural gas as of 2017, Nigeria holds the largest reserve of natural gas in Africa and the ninth largest in the world.³²

Because the Nigerian economy is almost exclusively oil driven, it rises and falls with the global oil price. From 2005 to 2015, for instance, the Nigerian economy performed remarkable well and grew at a robust rate of about 6.5 percent, per years, due in part, to high oil prices. In 2016, however, with the fall in oil prices, the Nigerian economy fell head-on into recession and contracted by minus 1.5 percent.³³ In addition, inflation doubled from 9.5 per cent in December 2015 to 18.5 per cent in December 2016, “driven by higher energy and food prices and the depreciation of the naira, itself the result of external shocks. Foreign exchange reserves fell from \$28.3 billion at the end of 2015 to \$25.8 billion at the end of December 2016.”³⁴ The value of the naira plummeted, and it lost almost half of its value against the dollar. Similarly, foreign direct investments (FDIs) declined markedly from a peak of \$8.9 billion in 2011 to \$3.1 billion in 2015 and did not recover in 2016.”³⁵ There are huge implications for the underperformance of the Nigerian economy. Just to mention a few,

About 61 percent of the population live on USD1 or less a day. Human development indicators paint a bleak picture of Nigeria’s health and education systems. The country has the fourth-highest infant mortality rate in the world, with nearly 55 percent attributable to malnutrition. Nigeria’s primary school net enrolment rate is 54 percent and 10 million children of school age do not attend school.³⁶

³⁰ Ibid., xvii.

³¹ Nigeria. *Nigeria Economic Recovery & Growth Plan 2017-2020* (Nigeria: Ministry of Budget and National Planning, 2017), 80.

³² “Natural Gas Reserves by Country,” Index Mundi, Accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.indexmundi.com/energy/?product=gas&graph=reserves&display=rank>

³³ Okonjo-Iweala, *Fighting Corruption*, xvii.

³⁴ Nigeria. *Nigeria Economic Recovery*, 55.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 29.

There is also high unemployment, especially among the youth. In the midst of the above, the question that necessarily arises is why has Nigeria failed to translate her enormous economic potential into genuine development?

III. Causal Agents of Socio-Economic Challenges in Nigeria

A. The Colonial Configuration

The amalgamation of different territories with different people, having different languages, customs and religious practices was primarily for the political convenience of the British colonial government than for any other reason. Several studies today indicate that right from the amalgamation of Nigeria, the colonial masters advertently or inadvertently set up a “country” whose unity was bound to be problematic. Given the diversity of the different regions that co-existed before the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates, the colonial masters paid more attention to the policies that were designed to maximize control rather than those that would foster integration of the different tribes, cultures economic, religious and social groups. Even the constitution of the colonial masters became instruments of division. The Richards Constitution of 1946, for instance, divided the country into tri-national state structure.

This divide and rule policy of the colonial government, which arbitrarily lumped peoples and tribes into three regions, while aiding the colonial administration, created the seed of regionalism. This regionalism would eventually endanger the peace, integration, and security of Nigeria. Unfortunately, even the colonialists themselves saw the inherent complications in the amalgamation. In 1948, Sir Arthur Richards noted:

It is only the accident of British suzerainty which had made Nigeria one country. It is still far from being one country or one nation socially or even economically... socially and politically there are deep differences between the major tribal groups. They do not speak the same language and they have highly divergent customs and ways of life and they represent different stages of culture.³⁷

³⁷ Ray Ekpu, “Geographical Expression: So What?” *TheGuardian*, August 15, 2017, <https://guardian.ng/opinion/geographical-expression-so-what/>.

With the independence of Nigeria, the political class that emerged, rather than question the rationale for the division of Nigeria into three disproportionate regions dominated by three ethnic groups - Igbo, Hausa Fulani and Yoruba - would at once begin to operate from the lenses of these separate ethnic groups. Expectedly, the minority tribes were left at the mercy of the dominant tribes. Thus, by design or accident, the ethnic minorities within the regions, such as the Tivs, Idomas, Ijaws and Urhobos, were already in conflict with the major ethnic groups in the various regions.³⁸ The consequence of this was the agitation for the creation of more regions. The mutual suspicion of tribes and blatant exhibition of regional rather than national sentiments became responsible for the tragic civil war fought in Nigeria between 1967 and 1970. Hence, Seseer p. Mou was right to suggest that “the basis for disunity, religious disharmony and economic under-development had clearly been planted by the British colonialists in Nigeria before their departure at independence in 1960.”³⁹ The fact of a military coup and the three years of civil wars that followed the independence of Nigeria are indictments of the colonial configuration of Nigeria.

Right up to the time of independence, there continued to be tension among the tribes. Even the political class that emerged after the independence of Nigeria maintained that, although the Northern and Southern protectorates were amalgamated, Nigeria was far from being a united country. Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, the first prime ministry of Nigeria, did not mince words when he argued that “since the amalgamation of the southern and northern provinces in 1914, Nigeria has existed as one country only on paper... it is still far away from being united. Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country.”⁴⁰ This sentiment was more articulately expressed by Chief Obafemi Awolowo shortly before independence. In one of his speeches, he noted:

Nigeria is not a nation. It is a mere geographical expression. There are no Nigerians in the same sense as there are English or Welsh or French. The word Nigeria is merely

³⁸ Seseer Muo and Dan Mou “Peace, Security and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects” *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (IJPCS)*, 4, no 2 (December 2017): 28, <http://www.rcmss.com>.

³⁹ Ibid., 28

⁴⁰ Ray Ekpu, “Geographical Expression.”

to distinguish those who live within the boundaries of Nigeria from those who do not.⁴¹

John Campbell, a former US Ambassador to Nigeria, succinctly captures the British colonial complicity in Nigeria's perennial conflicts - especially in the North, and between the South and the North. He reveals that because the British colonial power was interested in reducing the cost of governance, they ruled the North through the emirate system that predated the colonial times. In order to preserve the system, they discouraged Christian missionary activities in the North. This meant that the North could not have Western schools - which were largely propagated by Christian missionaries - like in the South, and only had a few hospitals and clinics in comparison with the South. This decision, he argues, is responsible today for the premodern backwardness in the North today, leading to overwhelming poverty in the region.⁴²

In addition, apart from blocking access to education and other social welfare services that were provided by the Christian missionaries, the colonial masters discouraged Christian traders from settling in the North; where permitted, they were to settle in separate communities so as to avoid assimilation.⁴³ This arrangement is responsible for a number of post-colonial conflicts that continue to exist today in various parts of the North, especially in Kaduna State where communities continue to exist along religious boundaries. Indeed, we can argue that the Northern Region is the poverty and illiteracy capital of Nigeria. Little wonder the region has become a hotbed of conflicts and terrorist activities. The largely illiterate populace provide a handy source of the mercenaries often needed by unscrupulous politicians in manipulating the system for their political interests.

What the above reveals is that right from the period of independence, Nigeria as a nation was sitting on a keg of gunpowder that was bound to explode. The explosion did not take too long: barely six years after independence, Nigeria witnessed her first military coup. The military takeover of

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² John Campbell, *Nigeria: Dancing on the Brink* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 2.

⁴³ Ibid., 2.

power on the 15th of January 1966 is seen by many as a reaction to a perceived marginalization of some sections of the country by the British prior to their departure.

B. Military Dictatorship

Six years after her independence, Nigeria's prospect for greatness was truncated by a military coup. This coup was only an expression of a much deeper problem about national integration and unity and a visible manifestation of the mutual distrust that was evident in the newly formed nation. Motivated by ethnic interests and competition for the spoils of the new-found independent nation, Major Chukwuma Nzeogwu and his cohorts planned and executed the first military coup in Nigeria. In this coup, prominent Nigerian leaders including Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa - the first Prime Minister of Nigeria, Chief Samuel Akintola, the Premier of the Western Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello the Premier of the Northern Region and also the Sultan of Sokoto, along with five other prominent personalities, including senior military officers (four of them from the North) were assassinated.

The general sentiment then, was that the coup was an Igbo conspiracy against the rest of the nation. There was an obvious justification for this line of thought. The President of the country, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe - an Igbo man - was outside the country on sick leave at the time. Could it have been a coincidence? Again, Michael Okpara, the Premiere of the Eastern Region was spared. This was coupled with the fact that General Johnson Aguiyi Ironsi, who would emerge as chief of state, was Igbo. The suspicion of Igbo conspiracy against the rest of the country would lead to a counter coup in the same year in which prominent Igbos were murdered, including Ironsi, the first military head of state. The counter coup also unleashed a bloody pogrom against Igbos in the North and by extension Christians who had settled in the North. The result of the massacre was the flight of the Igbos back to the Eastern part of the country, and the subsequent agitation for secession that would lead to the civil war.

The first military coup orchestrated by Major Nzeogwu, opened a floodgate of subsequent coups in Nigeria. Following the civil war were a series of military coups and counter coups. In 1975,

the military regime of Yakubu Gowon was overthrown by General Murtala Mohammed, who was subsequently murdered a few months later and his deputy, Olusegun Obasanjo ruled the country until 1979 when he handed over power through a military sponsored election that produced President Shehu Shagari as a civilian head of state. The civilian administration of Shagari was overthrown in 1983 by Muhammadu Buhari who took Nigeria back to a military era. In 1985, Buhari was overthrown by General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, and he ruled until 1993 when he conducted what is today considered one of the most credible elections in Nigeria's history. However, the result of that election was annulled and a caretaker administration was constituted, placing Chief Ernest Shonekan as the head of state. Shonekan's administration was short-lived as he was sacked by a military coup organized by General Sani Abacha. Abacha then ruled Nigeria until his death in 1998.⁴⁴ What is obvious is that, out of fifty-eight years of Nigeria's independence, over thirty have been spent under military dictatorships.

Military dictatorship in Nigeria is responsible for a number of societal ills that have placed Nigeria where it is today. The first military coup in Nigeria and subsequent ones created a permanent crack in the unity of Nigeria. This disunity is evident in the first public address by President Yakubu Gowon after he took over power following the counter coup by the Northerners. He said:

As a result of the recent events and of the other previous ones, I have come to strongly believe that we cannot honestly and sincerely continue in this wise, as the basis of trust and confidence in our unitary system of government has been unable to stand the test of time...the base of unity is not there.⁴⁵

Sadly, this mutual suspicion has continued in Nigeria till this day. It is responsible for several religious and ethnic conflicts Nigeria has experienced. More so, military rulership in Nigeria is largely responsible for the socio-political and economic quagmire that the country has continued to suffer. The militarization of government, disregard for democratic institutions, endemic bribery and corruption in high places, entronement of tribal sentiments in government offices, the corruption of

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7-9.

⁴⁵ Richard Bourne, *Nigeria. A New History of a Turbulent Century* (London, United Kingdom: Zed Books Ltd., 2015), 118-119.

civil service structures and a host of other social ills in Nigeria can be traced to the protracted military rulership of Nigeria. Further, during the military era, a number of decrees, policies and structures were put in place that continue to constitute major roadblocks to national cohesion and economic sustainability today.

C. A Blessing and the Curse of Oil

The discovery of oil in Nigeria was welcomed with mixed reactions. While some analysts blame it for the underdevelopment and hardship experienced by a majority of the population, others attribute the economic growth in the country to it. Hence, the paradox of oil as both a blessing and a curse. There is no doubt that the Nigerian economy has experienced tremendous growth in so many ways, but the fact also remains that there has not been commensurate human development to show for it, as the general standard of living in Nigeria is still very low and the cost of living very high. This paradox has led to what is now generally described as ‘the resource curse.’ The resource curse is “commonly defined as the tendency of states with large reserves of natural resources, such as oil or diamonds, to be less developed than similar states lacking such resources.”⁴⁶ Thus, oil, rather than lead to sustainable development becomes a cog in the country’s wheel of progress.

Although the search for oil started in Nigeria in 1908, records show that Shell Darcey drilled the first well in 1938.⁴⁷ But it was not until 1956 that Shell Petroleum discovered oil in commercial quantity. The petroleum industry grew rapidly from 1960 and subsequently in the 1970s. At present, Nigeria has four refineries, with a combined installed refining capacity of 445,000 barrels per day (bpd). The first, Port Harcourt Refinery, was commissioned in 1965 with an installed capacity of 35,000 bpd and later expanded to 60,000 bpd. The second, Warri Refinery, was commissioned in 1978, with an installed refining capacity 100,000 bpd, and upgraded to 125,000 bpd in 1986. The third, Kaduna Refinery, was commissioned in 1980 with an installed refining capacity

⁴⁶ Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey Sachs, and Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Escaping the Resource Curse* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5.

⁴⁷ Aigbedion I. “Reservoir fluid differentiation Case Study from Oredo Field in the Niger Delta – Nigeria,” *International Journal of Physical Sciences* vol. 2 (6), pp. 144, (June 2007), <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJPS>.

of 100,000 bpd, and upgraded to 110, 000 bpd in 1986.⁴⁸ The fourth is the second Port Harcourt Refinery, it was commissioned in 1989, with 150,000 bpd processing capacity, and designed to fulfil the dual role of supplying the domestic market and exporting its surplus.⁴⁸

As far back as 1979, Nigeria was already producing over 2 million barrels of oil per day. Her oil Revenue was at about \$15 billion. Her foreign exchange reserve was about \$4.42 billion. This was just nineteen years after her independence. Today, Nigeria's Oil reserve is over 30 billion barrels.⁴⁹ The ordinary expectation is that, with this whopping sum of revenue, Nigeria should be one of the developed countries of the world today. Those who are familiar with Nigeria know that even though there are so many signs of development in some of the major cities, real economic growth and holistic human development is still more a dream than a reality.

Indeed, the discovery of oil in Nigeria has led to a number of challenges, including the neglect of the agricultural sector, conflict and insecurity in the Niger-Delta, reckless government spending and borrowing, unemployment, weakening of democratic institutions, and large-scale corruption. Indeed, "the oil boom of the 1970s led Nigeria to neglect its strong agricultural bases. Oil and gas exports account for more than 95% of export earnings and over 80% of federal government revenue."⁵⁰ Hence, Nigeria's agricultural sector has been experiencing a steady decline in agricultural production and the general attitude to farming. From a major exporter of food and crops in the West Africa, Nigeria has today become a major importer of food. The discovery of oil emptied the food reserve that Nigeria had, and made export almost impossible. Macartan Humphrey et al, capture this scenario aptly in their theory of 'Dutch disease' when they said that the discovery of oil,

Makes exporting non-natural resource commodities more difficult and competing with imports across a wide range of commodities almost impossible. Foreign exchange earned from the natural resource meanwhile may be used to purchase internationally traded goods, at the expense of domestic manufactures of goods.

⁴⁸ Chris O. Udoka and Steve E. Nkamare, "The Implications of Crude Oil Glut on the Performance of the Nigerian Capital Market," *Journal of Business and Management* 18, no. 5 (May 2016): 14, <http://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jbm/papers/Vol18-issue5/Version-2/B1805021123.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Kingsley Jeremiah. "Why Nigeria may miss Targets for Oil Reserves," *The Guardian*, (March 2018), <https://guardian.ng/news/why-nigeria-may-miss-targets-for-oil-reserves>.

⁵⁰ "Economy," Federal Republic of Nigeria, accessed 17th March 2014, <http://www.nigeria.gov.ng/index.php>.

Simultaneously, domestic resources such as labor and materials are shifted to natural resource sector. Consequently, the price of these resources rises on the domestic market, thereby increasing the cost of production in other sectors.⁵¹

Due to the government neglect of the Niger-Delta, which is the host region of Nigeria's oil, and more tragically, with the flagrant display of wealth by the government and incessant cases of embezzlement, there arose a clamor for resource control by the people of the Niger-Delta region. This state of affairs has often times led to violent conflicts between the militant groups and the federal government. The groups believe that, since the government does not have their interest at heart, they can safeguard themselves and protect their natural endowment. Every so often, the government has responded to this corruption by sending more military troops to the region to quell the agitations.

Michael Ross opines that: "In low income countries, the discovery of oil can set off an explosion in government finances."⁵² This is the case in Nigeria. We have incessant cases of inflated contracts, buying of expensive cars and jets for government functionaries, buying of houses in Europe and America and public officers paying themselves jumbo salaries and other emoluments. On the 12th of February, 2014, the President of Nigeria sacked the Minister of Aviation, for among other acts of violation of public office, the purchase of two bullet-proof vehicles at a whopping sum of about \$1.6million.⁵³ Furthermore, members of the Federal House of Representatives had on the 19th of March, 2014 mandated the Public Accounts Committee to probe an alleged spending of N3.1billion in two years by the Minister of Petroleum, for air charter services.⁵⁴ Apart from the problem of a seeming uncontrollable quest to spend, there is also the uncontrollable desire to borrow money from the international community. Humphrey et al note that countries with oil have more

⁵¹ Humphreys, Sachs, and Stiglitz, *Escaping*, 5.

⁵² Michael Ross, *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012) kindle

⁵³ Waheed Odusile, "Stella and her Armoured Limousines," *The Nation*, October 22, 2013, <http://thenationonline.net/stella-armoured-limousines/>.

⁵⁴ Emman Ovuakporie and Levinus Nwabughogu, "Allison-Madueke to face Reps probe for spending N3.120bn on air charter services," *Vanguard*, (March 20, 2014), <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2014/03/allison-madueke-face-reps-probe-spending-n3-120bn-air-charter-services/>.

access to international loans than countries without it.⁵⁵ Nigeria for instance has been on a borrowing spree for years, and the monies borrowed are embezzled by public officials or wasted in either fighting political opponents, campaigning for elections, or maintaining their grip on power. These monies, then, are not used for meaningful developmental projects and programs.

In addition, Oil wealth has a way of affecting democracy in a country. Unbridled access to wealth at the disposal of government officials can, in very many ways, become an inducement to manipulate power. When those in government have unhindered access to oil money, they find it easy to use all available means - including extracting loyalty from electoral umpires- to remain in power. They can also repress or co-opt opposition elements and thus remain in office for as long as they can. Many past and present political leaders in Nigeria have been accused, and many found guilty.

The presence of oil wealth can also breed an avalanche of corrupt practices. It has the capacity to weaken legislative and judicial structures and make corruption among government officials enticing and easy. In Nigeria, there is no doubt that corruption and mismanagement of funds have been largely responsible for the “curse of oil syndrome.” Monies realized from the sale oil are not properly managed for the good of the people. Leaders divert funds to their personal accounts outside the country. Contracts are not transparently awarded as they have become gift items for political cronies and loyalists, and for appeasing political ‘gods’. Contracts connected with oil are often inflated right from the top to the bottom, as corruption takes hold of everybody in the system. Of course, once corruption is entrenched in government, accountability and transparency become mere words.

D. Foreign Governments and their Cronies

Foreign Governments and their emissaries are also complicit in the dilapidated socio-economic conditions of Nigeria today. There are three major ways in which foreign governments have contributed to the poor performance of Nigeria in the global economy. First, through direct or

⁵⁵ Humphrey, et al, *Escaping*, 8.

indirect sponsorship of violent conflicts. Countries such as Iran and Libya have been accused severally of either directly sponsoring different kinds of violent conflicts in Nigeria or empowering rebel and terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram in the destruction of lives and property in Nigeria.⁵⁶

Second, manipulation of local policies and politics through such global financial instruments of power like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Here, countries such as the United States of America⁵⁷ and England are guilty. Again, some multinational Oil Companies take advantage of the poor law implementation in the country to exploit the people. Closely related is the compromising of the officials and structures of governments in Nigeria by multinational companies and institutions. Sadly, given the near total reliance of Nigeria on such institutions, the country is forced to comply even to the detriment of local economy.

Thirdly, many countries today including USA, England, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia are destinations of stolen monies from Nigeria. Since, the one who keeps stolen goods is considered an accomplice, it is justifiable to maintain that those countries who play host to the stolen wealth from Nigeria are also culpable for Nigeria's economic misery. On the 5th of March, 2014, the US Government froze about \$458million belonging to Nigeria's former military head of state, General Sanni Abacha.⁵⁸ As evidences show, this money had been in banks in the US for over two decades. One wonders where, why and how the international laws on money laundering became ineffective in preventing the laundering of such colossal sums out of Nigeria.

In the midst of all of these, one is led to suspect that there is a conspiracy between some developed countries in the Global North and corrupt politicians in Nigeria to ruin the Nigerian

⁵⁶ Samuel Ogundipe, "Buhari Blames Gaddafi for Killings Across Nigeria," *Premium Times*, April 12, 2018, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/264764-buhari-blames-gaddafi-for-killings-across-nigeria.html>; Jacob Zenn, "The Islamic Movement and Iranian Intelligence Activities in Nigeria" *Combating Terrorism Center*, volume 6, issue 10, October 2013, <https://ctc.usma.edu/the-islamic-movement-and-iranian-intelligence-activities-in-nigeria/>.

⁵⁷ Ike Nnia Mba. "US Economic Policy Towards Nigeria: Implications, Pros & Cons," *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, Vol.16, 2013.

⁵⁸ Kauthar Anumba-Khaleel, "Abacha Loot: Between the Tangible and Intangible," *Leadership*, (July 8, 2018), <https://leadership.ng/2018/07/08/abacha-loot-between-the-tangible-and-intangible/>.

economy. These practices contradict the virtue of universal solidarity with the poor and the helpless. In solidarity with the poor of Nigeria, foreign nations and institutions who have become collaborators with corrupt elements in Nigeria must be willing to end such collaborations and stand for the oppressed. More so, there cannot be peace in Nigeria without the collaboration of other countries, as majority of the weapons used in the various conflicts are supplied by some foreign countries.

E. Violent Conflicts in Nigeria and its Consequences on Economic Sustainability

Intractable conflicts experienced in different parts of the country account for another major reason why the socio-economic condition of Nigeria has continued to remain in a comatose state. Nigeria is no stranger to violence. As earlier noted, of the Fifty-Eight years of her political independence from England, three years were wasted on a tragic civil war, thirty-four years were spent under various military dictatorships, and the remaining twenty-one years have been punctuated with different forms and levels of conflicts. Today, Nigeria is almost synonymous with violence and insecurity. Conflicts in Nigeria stem from intolerance of others on account of their ethnic, religious or political differences. The impacts of this intolerance on national sustainability are colossal.

Ethnic conflicts have become widespread in different parts of Nigeria. Although a majority of these conflicts can be identified as low intensity conflicts in comparison with other kinds of conflicts such as the Boko Haram terrorist activities, there are some others that qualify as high intensity conflicts and have continued to devastate the national landscape of the Nigerian society. Nigeria has witnessed the intermittent inter-ethnic and inter-clannish conflicts, such as between the Tivs and the Jukuns of Benue and Taraba States, the Ife and the Modakeke people of Osun State, the Ijaws and the Urhobos of Delta State, the Umuleri and the Aguleri people of Anambra State, the Egbira and Bassa people of Nasarawa State, and those between Fulani herdsmen and local farmers across the entire stretch of the Middle Belt and in pockets of the entire country. Again, there have been different expressions of violence orchestrated by some ethnic nationalists such as the Oodua Peoples

Congress (O.P.C.) among the Yorubas, the Bakassi Boys and the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) fighters among the Igbos.⁵⁹

Religion is an extremely sensitive issue in Nigeria. Religious conflicts have been the most widespread and have triggered very deadly clashes at the local, state and even national levels. Prior to the arrival of Islam and Christianity, traditional African religions (ATR) or Nigerian traditional religion (NTR), as the case may be, existed. These were practiced by different tribes and ethnic groups. Because the African tradition religions did not have proselytism as its major focus, there was little or no attempt at recruiting membership. Therefore, there was no violent spread of the faith. With the arrival of Islam and Christianity with their diverse methods of proselytization, religious tensions emerged in Nigeria. The role of religion in conflicts in Nigeria has become more complex than ever.

There are two ways in which religion can play unfortunate roles in conflicts. First, where religion becomes the identity marker, the fault lines of conflicts follow religious identity lines between one religion and the other. Second, religion can shape the conflict itself, by shaping what people fight about. Religious conflicts in Nigeria take on these two dimensions: with reference to situations where religion becomes the identity marker, religious conflicts in Nigeria are largely between Islam and Christianity in the North, and between Christianity and NTR in the East, though at a very minimal scale in the latter. Therefore, in a way, what takes place in the North between Christians and Muslims takes place in other parts of the country between Christians and NTR adherents. Just as the Muslims attempt to force Christians into conversion to Islam based on their conviction that they worship the true God and Christians must either convert or face the wrath due to infidels, in the same vein, in the East, there are Christian fanatics who insist that adherents to NTR must become Christians or risk their shrines being burnt down.

⁵⁹ Ehusani, George. "Peacebuilding and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria: The Missing Ingredients" A Keynote Address presented at the 2nd National Workshop of Stakeholders of Peace Research and Conflict Resolution in Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria, March 18, 2015.

Religion, as a powerful source of identity has become the rallying factor for some radicalized people who at the slightest provocation vent their anger on innocent members of the society. The Boko Haram phenomenon is so far the worst manifestation of this reality. Although from its origin, Boko Haram claims to fight against Western Civilization, attacks by the sect have more often than not, taken on religious dimensions. The Boko Haram attacks have been defined by some as a continuing conflict between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. While this may not completely be the case, given that on some occasions, even mosques and Muslims have been targeted, one cannot deny the fact that churches and places of Christian religious worship are deliberately targeted in majority of the violent attacks. A new wave of violent attacks gaining popularity are those perpetrated by the Fulani Herdsmen. These attacks take both ethnic and religious dimensions, particularly in rural areas. Such is the case in Benue State of Nigeria. In some other cases, churches have been targeted, including the very recent killing of two Catholic priests and members of the church during a routine morning mass. This situation has led to a degeneration of the relations between Christians and Muslims, especially in Nigeria's Middle Belt and Northern regions. In some parts of the country today, the relations between Christians and Muslims have degenerated beyond what used to be simple fear and suspicion, to actual hatred and disdain.

Many factors have been evinced for the religious conflicts in Nigeria. Apart from the politically motivated religious conflicts, many of the conflicts are driven by poor education or widespread ignorance about the religious and ethnic complexities of the country, misunderstandings of the doctrines of the different religions by many of their adherents, poor adjustment to the social demands of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, widespread poverty and youth unemployment, failed leadership, politicization of religion, and bad governance.⁶⁰

Another major kind of conflict in Nigeria today are economically-induced conflicts. These

⁶⁰ Lux Terra Foundation and Islamic Education Trust, "When Inter-Faith Action for Peace dialogued for Better Nigeria," Paper Presented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Inter-Faith Action for Peace (IFAP), at the Ibru Ecumenical Centre, Warri, Nigeria, August 2012.

conflicts arise from the marginalization of the poor by the rich, political class. A vast majority of Nigerians today are neglected, exploited and abused by the rich. The result of this poverty is utter frustration and violent tendencies. As the Latin American Bishops Conference captures it, “excessive inequalities systematically prevent the satisfaction of the legitimate aspirations of the ignored sectors, and breed increasing frustration.”⁶¹ In many cases, these conditions of neglect, exploitation and indifference to the legitimate needs of the poor and reckless display of affluence by the rich, turn the poor masses into a ticking “time bomb, waiting to explode at the slightest provocation.

The reality is that both the rich and the poor suffer the consequences of such frustrations. While the poor is kept awake at night by hunger, the rich keeps vigil also as a consequence of insecurity and the fear of the perceived evil plots of the poor. Unfortunately, then, the rich who deprives the poor of his livelihood cannot sleep with his two eyes closed. Some of the violent conflicts in Nigeria, especially the economically motivated ones, are spurred by poverty and the agitation for equality. The rich cannot be safe in a country where the angry-poor are their neighbors. This is why, in Nigeria today, there is an ugly trend of kidnapping, with outrageous ransom demands made of victims by their captors. While there cannot be any justification for kidnapping which subjects a fellow human being to inhuman conditions, the flagrant and blazing show of wealth by the rich, who in many cases have stolen from the poor, account for many of the kidnappings. The poor have realized that without such a sadistic measure, the rich will never make available to them the resources they need (and deserve) for basic existence. Some kidnappers have been known to affirm that they were driven to the edge by poverty and lack of economic opportunities. In many kidnap cases, the victims are perceived to be rich and to have stolen from the poor without setting up social structures that would ameliorate the lives of the poor.

Apart from the wanton destruction of lives and social infrastructures, conflicts account first, for a huge loss of investment opportunities in Nigeria. Secondly, there is the flight of human capital,

⁶¹ Emelio Betances, *The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 51.

as young enterprising members of the society are forced to emigrate or are simply lured away to other African countries, Europe, or America by the prospect of better living condition. Thirdly, the money lost in conflicts or channeled to security and defense, could have been used for developmental projects such as, education, job creation, agriculture, prevention of diseases, sanitation and clean water. Fourthly, investments remain stagnant during periods of conflict. Finally, and most importantly, conflicts engender mutual suspicion, destroy social capital and drastically affect the social and moral fabric of the nation.⁶² The destruction of the social and moral fabric of the society progressively dethrones the pursuit of the common good while enthroning egocentrism and other forms of moral vortex in the society.

F. Egocentrism and its Tributaries: Tribalism/Nepotism

Although Nigeria is a collectivistic country that is not only entrenched in, but celebrates the value of communality, the leaders are drenched in deep egocentrism, one that vitiates the realization of the common good and reveals a complete departure from the principle of solidarity. Egocentrism is antithetical to the social nature of humanity and the communalistic nature of the Nigerian; its socio-economic consequences are devastating. It “obscures the relational dimension of the person and leads him to close himself off in his own little world, to be attentive to mostly his own needs and desires, worrying little about others.”⁶³ Egocentrism recognizes no duty to common good, but rather enthrones self-interest which ultimately leads to the exploitation of the society and the sacrificing of the common good on the altar of the personal good of the individual.

Today, the criteria for measuring economic and social prosperity in Nigeria, especially among the political class, include infinite personal financial reserves in and outside the country, several houses in the major cities in and outside the country, and fleets of state-of-the-art cars. This notion of economic prosperity inflicts grave harm to the nation, but more specifically to the poor since it leads to an unbridled quest for wealth which then leads to exploitation and embezzlement of

⁶² Ehusani. “*Peacebuilding and Democratic Consolidation*”

⁶³ Mike Aquilina, *The Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church: The Didache Series* (Woodridge, Illinois: Midwest Theological Forum, 2013), 194.

public funds and the hoarding of the wealth of the nation.

More so, egocentrism is the root cause of many other ills in Nigeria. The list is endless: embezzlement, bribery, money laundering, mismanagement of public funds, irresponsible monetary and fiscal policies meant to service the lavish lifestyles of the leaders, and the enactment of anti-people laws that seek to perpetuate the yawning gap between the rich and the poor. Again, egocentrism is responsible for a number of the isms that ultimately lead to grave inequalities, both in the distribution of opportunities and the management of resources in the country. Further, egocentrism leads to different forms of conflicts which arise from the perception of marginalization. These isms include: tribalism, nepotism and sectionalism. The most obvious and deleterious consequence of the evil of egocentrism from the perspective of the isms aforementioned is that it either advertently or inadvertently tends to guarantee full humanity only to one's kit and kin. This "non-appreciation of the humanity of the other" is without doubt responsible for many of the ethnic conflicts in Nigeria.⁶⁴

Indeed, egocentrism in part accounts for the reason why Nigeria is rich but the citizens remain poor. As Paulinus Odozor observes "it is impossible to develop an economically prosperous nation when leaders consider the national treasury as their private property."⁶⁵ The embezzlement of funds by leaders with careless abandon is the bane of economic sustainability in Nigeria.

Nigeria cannot achieve its desired goal of sustainability with the various forms and levels of conflicts that continue to occur on nearly a daily basis. Again, the reality of a sustainable economy in Nigeria will remain elusive if the leaders do not divest themselves of their kleptocratic tendencies and scandalous egocentrism. Given its interdisciplinary nature, Catholic social teaching, through education in dialogue, peace and solidarity offers profound insights for understanding more clearly the impacts of conflicts and egocentrism on economic sustainability, and for achieving the vision of national integration and economic sustainability in the society. First, CST proposes principles for

⁶⁴ Odozor, *Truly Africa, and Wealthy*, 268.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

reflection, provides criteria for judgment and gives guidelines for action.⁶⁶ Second, CST instills a sense of the common good for all and the values of solidarity for those on the margins. Third, CST articulates a proper understanding of development, one that is grounded in peace, that provides a path to dialogue, and that works to democratize human flourishing as the means to sustainability.

In the next chapter, we shall explore, in detail, the theological foundations of dialogue, peace and solidarity, providing the denominative framework upon which to assess and investigate how these resources can be adapted to the Nigerian context for the realization of the goal of economic sustainability.

⁶⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 2000), 2423.

Chapter Two

Foundation for Economic Sustainability: Catholic Arguments for Dialogue, Peace and Solidarity

Authentic development entails a culture of dialogue, peace and solidarity. On these tripartite pillars, nations develop and rise, and without them, nations stumble and crumble. Dialogue is an effective vehicle for peace and economic development. It also inspires solidarity which manifests itself in genuine development. Investing in peace and stability is fundamental to long-term development and prosperity, and without peace development becomes illusive. Outcomes from a plethora of studies support conclusions of a positive correlation between peace and economic sustainability. This fact is acknowledged by the inclusion of peace among the top priorities of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Solidarity entails a fundamental recognition that first, all are created equal, in the image and likeness of God and, as such, all have an inherent human dignity that ought to be preserved and protected. In what follows, we shall examine the CST on dialogue, peace and solidarity.

I. Catholic Social Teaching on Dialogue

Society today has become much more pluralistic than ever. This reality makes dialogue inevitable for the well-functioning of society and indispensable for promoting and preserving unity and progress. Pope Paul VI articulates this when he teaches that dialogue is “demanded by the dynamic course of action which is changing the face of modern society and by the pluralism of society, the maturity humanity has reached in this day and age.”⁶⁷ This pluralistic nature of society gives rise to different forms of dialogue.

A. Forms of Dialogue

The Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences (FABC), enunciates a number of ways dialogue can be expressed: dialogue of life, theological dialogue, religious dialogue and dialogue of

⁶⁷ Paul VI, Encyclical On the Church *Ecclesiam Suam* (6 August 1964) §78, at the Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_06081964_ecclesiam.html.

works. Other forms of dialogue include, political dialogue and ethnic dialogue. In what follows, I shall explore these forms of dialogue.

i. Dialogue of Life

Dialogue is first and foremost a way of living. It is before all else, a mode of acting, an attitude and a spirit which guides one's conduct. Dialogue of life is one in which through the daily practices of living together, in helpfulness and open-heartedness, members of society witness to each other from the inherent values of their faith.⁶⁸ This is expressed in various ways, including, concern, respect, and hospitality toward one's neighbor in such a way that it leaves room for the other other's identity, manner of life and values.⁶⁹

For the Christian, dialogue must be seen as intrinsic to the Christian vocation. As the FABC argues, dialogue is the "norm and necessary manner of every form of Christian mission, as well as of every aspect of it, whether one speaks of simple presence and witness, service, or direct proclamation."⁷⁰ The Christian vocation must be permeated by such spirit of dialogue in order to be in keeping with both the demands of true humanity and the tenets of the gospel. Indeed, "every follower of Christ, by reason of his human and Christian vocation, is called to live dialogue in his or her daily life."⁷¹

ii. Theological Dialogue

Reflecting on the theological framework for dialogue, the CBCN maintain that, by pitching his tent with humanity, God, establishes an eternal dialogue with humanity and provides the basis for dialogue among humanity.⁷² In this regard, the incarnation represents the apex in the dialogue

⁶⁸ FABC Office of Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs (OEIA), *A Glimpse at Dialogue in Asia, 30th Anniversary* (Manila, Philippines: First Bishops' Institute for Interreligious Affairs, 2010), 14.

⁶⁹ Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. *The Attitude of the Church toward Followers of Other Religions: Reflections and Orientations on Dialogue and Mission* (10 June 1984) §29, at Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19840610_dialogo-missione_po.html.

⁷⁰ Ibid., §29.

⁷¹ Ibid., 10-12.

⁷² Peter Schineller ed., *The Voice of the Voiceless: Pastoral Letters and Communiqués of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria 1960-2002*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daily Graphics Nigeria Limited), 352.

between God and humanity and becomes foundational to the life and mission of the Church.

Theological dialogue can be achieved through the organization of fora where theological experts from different theological traditions, gathering as dialogue partners engage in theological discourse. These fora provide platforms for respectfully confronting areas of disagreements with a view to better understand the religious heritages of the other and develop much more deepened appreciation of areas of convergence. Theological dialogue often time embraces and leads to religious dialogue.

iii. Religious Dialogue

Religious dialogue is an acknowledgement that while holding to one's religious beliefs and traditions, one must not lose sight of areas of convergence. This point is reinforced by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council who teach that,

The Catholic Church, while clearly affirming her own identity, her own doctrine and her saving mission for all humanity, "rejects nothing of those things which are true and holy" in other religions; "she regards with respect those ways of acting and living and those precepts and teachings which, though often at variance with what she holds and expounds, frequently reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens everyone."⁷³

Religious dialogue is a "life style that encompasses living in harmony with peoples of other faiths."⁷⁴

It involves an open attitude towards other religions through sharing of religious experience and working together.⁷⁵ At a deeper level, religious dialogue goes beyond respective mutual religious conversations. This form of dialogue leads to the mutual enrichment of religions and fruitful cooperation for promoting and preserving not just spiritual ideals but the good of society at large.

Religious dialogue can be practiced on two levels: inter -religious dialogue and intra-religious dialogue. While inter-religious dialogue deals with the harmonious mutual engagement of one religion with another religion, intra-religious dialogue focuses on ecumenical efforts (ecumenism, with the Christian tradition) within a given religion, among the various denominations. This leads to more collaborative efforts not only on issues of faith but on socio-economic conditions

⁷³ Vatican Council II, Declaration on The Relation of The Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, (28 October, 1965) §2, at The Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ FABC Office, *A Glimpse at Dialogue*, 20.

that affect all members of society regardless of religious affiliations. In a way, we see how religious dialogue can as well inspire the dialogue of works.

iv. Dialogue of Works (Action)

The FABC argues that action is the most essential aspect of dialogue. They maintain that a further level of dialogue is,

That of deeds and collaboration with others for goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed toward the liberation and advancement of *humankind*. This kind of dialogue often occurs today in the context of international organizations, where Christians and followers of other religions confront together the problems of the world.⁷⁶

Dialogue in this regard, is therefore, not simply about issuance of joint statements and literary expositions. While these are important, dialogue “is a lifestyle, which can be learned only by doing.”⁷⁷ Issues of social justice, human rights and general socio-economic issues affect every human being wherever he or she is found and no matter the religion, ethnicity, or political divide to which he or she may be affiliated. Working together to alleviate the social-economic challenges bedeviling the society can become a great platform for dialogue within the society. The Second Vatican Council, advocates for this form of dialogue when the fathers call on the members of the Church to join with other members of society to defend and promote social justice, moral values, peace and liberty.⁷⁸ Dialogue of works very easily leads to collaborative community building efforts, joint civil advocacy and political partnerships.

v. Political Dialogue

Political dialogue seeks to achieve practical and peaceful solutions to problems of political nature. This form of dialogue involves a wide range of activities, from grassroots community-based actions, to high level political negotiations such as national reconciliation conferences and high-level national summits. The major goal of political dialogue is to identify conflict drivers, address societal threats that are inimical to peaceful coexistence and can instigate conflicts, address existing conflicts,

⁷⁶ Pontifical Council, *The Attitude of the Church*, §29.

⁷⁷ FABC Office, *A Glimpse at Dialogue*, 26.

⁷⁸ Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, §3.

“foster reconciliation, build a greater national consensus and social cohesion, and define a shared vision of the future.”⁷⁹ In some situations, political dialogue can help to strengthen the legitimacy of democratic institutions.

However, we must acknowledge that it is not usually easy to build sufficient social cohesion and functional democratic institutions especially in societies that have been ravaged by violent conflict. It is building that requires patience, commitment and focus. In fact, it is a process that takes decades rather than years. For political dialogue to be successful it must be sustained across all the levels of society and for a prolonged period of time.⁸⁰ It must also seek to respect all who are involved in the process, no matter their religious or ethnic backgrounds. Some political dialogues are carried out even within the same ethnic groups or in a society with diverse ethnic groups. In some cases, political dialogue can also address ethno-social challenges.

vi. Ethnic Dialogue

In societies that are gifted with a multiplicity of ethnicity, inter-ethnic dialogue is central to the realization of lasting peace and genuine development. Inter-ethnic dialogue helps to remove the cloud of mutual suspicion that could often exist among ethnic groups, and leads to an appreciation and understanding of the values of those who do not belong to one's ethnic group or who do not share one's cultural or social views and beliefs. The promotion of inter-ethnic dialogue is vital in all levels of society, from the local to the state and federal levels. Further, this dialogue must embrace a wide range of groups including traditional authorities, political leaders, religious leaders and tribal heads.

So many benefits are derivable from such dialogue. Among others, inter-ethnic dialogue can, “resolve immediate problems or concerns between ethnic groups on vertical

⁷⁹ “The Role of Political Dialogue in Peacebuilding and State-building: An Interpretation of Current Experience,” International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building, accessed November 30, 2018, https://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/bd/c8/bdc8e1a2-65b0-4305-94d8-20d02d05323e/the_role_of_political_dialogue_in_peacebuilding_and_statebuilding_en.pdf, 2.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 5.

and horizontal, as well as local and national, levels,”⁸¹ build trust and foster consensus between groups and ultimately, help the community to address or re-dress issues related to marginalization and inequality. In addition, ethnic dialogue promotes inter-ethnic and intercultural understanding, thereby minimizing the prospect for conflicts. In a number of ways therefore, transversal ethnic dialogue is crucial for attending to the challenges that can sometimes arise from conflicting cultural interests and needs, and the weaponization of ethnic differences for dubious purposes by both political leaders, and sometimes, by traditional and religious leaders as is the case in Nigeria.

While all these forms of dialogue are distinct, they are, at the same time, complementary and not mutually exclusive. However, whatever form dialogue takes, there are so many inherent values in dialogue. The findings of human sciences reveal that interpersonal dialogue can often expose the limitations in one’s own points of view as well as the possibility for overcoming such limitations. Through dialogue a person could discover that he or she does not possess the truth in a perfect and total way. This awareness leads to mutual affirmation, reciprocal correction, and fraternal exchange, and to an ever-greater maturity which in turn generates interpersonal communion. Religious experiences and outlooks can themselves be purified and enriched in this process of encounter.⁸² Although, to achieve these values, there are certain attitudes that are indispensable.

B. Factors that Affect Genuine Dialogue

A number of factors can either enhance or hinder effective dialogue. Genuine and effective dialogue is not a product of accident. It is achieved through rigorous intentional efforts that demand certain elements. Among others, genuine dialogue requires a spirit of openness. Openness here entails the readiness not only to prudently share one’s side of the story, but the willingness to listen

⁸¹ “Results of a Participatory Assessment: National and Local Capacities for Strengthening Inter-ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration,” UN Programme to Enhance Inter - Ethnic Dialogue and Collaboration, accessed December 4th 2018, http://www.sdgfund.org/sites/default/files/UNDP_Participatory_Report_Full_English.pdf, 8.

⁸² Pontifical Council, *The Attitude of the Church*, §35.

to and evaluate the reasonableness of the thoughts of the other with a generous heart. One must recognize that listening to the other does not necessarily mean that one agrees with the other.

Another requirement of dialogue is the sincere acceptance of differences and the specific nature of the other and his/her experiences.

[Dialogue] presupposes that each party should become really aware of what separates it from the other, and that it should assume it, with a risk of tension that comes from it, without renouncing through cowardice or constraint what it knows to be true and just, for this would result in a shaky compromise. And, on the other hand, one should not attempt to reduce the other party to a mere object, but one should consider the party to be an intelligent, free and responsible subject.⁸³

Beyond discerning the specific differences between one party and the other, dialogue,

Is at the same time the search for what is and that which remains common to people, even in the midst of tensions, opposition and conflicts. In this sense, it is to make the other party a neighbor. It is to accept its contribution, it is to share with it responsibility before truth and justice. It is to suggest and to study all the possible formulas for honest reconciliation, while being able to link to the just defense of the interests and honor of the party which one represents ...the demands of the general good which is common to both.⁸⁴

In this way, dialogue truly becomes a medium through which people discover one another and discover the values inherent in others, and their “hopes and peaceful aspirations that too often lie hidden in their hearts.”⁸⁵ Thus, true dialogue provides the forum for the members of one human family to be connected with one another and mutually enrich not just one another but humanity.

Again, for the actualization of genuine dialogue, one that leads to peace and solidarity, stereotypes which often lead to ingrained fear, ignorance, suspicion and superiority complex must be eschewed. A grave obstacle to dialogue is the attitude of an a priori resolution to concede nothing, to shut one’s ears from listening to the other and to constitute oneself into a quasi-magisterium and the ultimate the measure of justice. This too must be shunned. When all these bottlenecks to fruitful dialogue are removed, the society is bound to experience lasting peace.

⁸³ John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, Dialogue for Peace, a Challenge for Our Time* (1 January 1983) §6, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19821208_xvi-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁸⁴ Ibid., §6.

⁸⁵ Ibid., §4.

D. Dialogue for Peace

The fruit of dialogue is peace, and peace is a necessary condition for dialogue.

Dialogue, both at different levels and forms is essential for the attainment of genuine peace, stability and security in a society. Ethnic dialogue for instance facilitates better appreciation of the cultures and practices of others, this appreciation leads to the building of bridges rather than walls. This appreciation is true also of religious dialogue which brings about mutual understanding and acceptance of the inherent values in other religions or denominations. Both interreligious dialogue and ecumenical dialogue make it possible for people of different faith traditions to become more aware of their critical responsibilities to become agents of peace and the common good of the society. Today more than ever, there is the need for members of society to be more aware of the enormous potentials in each religion/denomination, ethnic or even racial affiliations, and how this potential, when harnessed in complementary efforts, can become sources of strength. This awareness is necessary in order to first, avoid the temptation of being weaponized by divide and conquer politicians who make a living out of conflicts and, second, to become more decisive and intentional in becoming an active force in the process of development. It is only in an environment of peace that genuine development can flourish.

II. Peace and Development

The Church teaches that peace is a gift from God; one that flows from the divine essence (Judges 6:24). Peace is also named as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) amplifying the thought of the great St. Augustine teaches that peace is not merely the absence of war, peace is “the tranquility of order”⁸⁶ and is vital for the respect and development of human life.⁸⁷ But even much more than the tranquility of order, peace represents the fullness of life; it “produces fruitfulness (Isaiah 48:18), well-being (Is 48:18),

⁸⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), 2304.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 2304.

prosperity (Is 54:13), absence of fear (Leviticus. 26:6) and profound joy (Proverbs 12:20).”⁸⁸

Because peace is of divine essence, creation, from the first moment of its inception was blest by God with the gift of peace. Peace is then, “the fruit of the harmony structured into human society by its Divine Founder,”⁸⁹ and “founded on the primary relationship that exists between every human being and God himself, a relationship marked by righteousness.”⁹⁰ It was God’s will that creation live in peace and harmony, not only among themselves, but with other creatures.

Unfortunately, this serene tranquility of peace that enveloped creation was punctured with the fall of our first parents. Indeed, the disorder introduced by the disobedience of the first family, which distorted the peace and harmony that God had planned for humanity, would steadily degenerate to a multitude of other kinds and degrees of chaos in creation.

Nevertheless, because peace is at the heart of creation, despite the disorder that continues to pervade human existence, peace remains the goal of life in society. Needless to say, every society desires peace, for peace is essential for the smooth and effective function of society. It is key in the achievement of genuine progress and integral human development. This is a *per se nota datum*, especially when we compare war-torn nations today with more peaceful nations of the world.

A. Peace and Integral Human Development

Pope Paul VI’s powerful statement that “development is the new name for peace”⁹¹ captures very strongly the value of peace for integral human development. As the Pontiff underscores, “peace is the only true direction of human progress”⁹² and “the goal of mankind in the process of its

⁸⁸ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (April 2, 2004) §489, Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.htm.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 215.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

⁹¹ Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* §76.

⁹² Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of a Day of Peace (1 January 1968)* at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19671208_i-world-day-for-peace.html.

growing self-awareness and of the development of society on the face of the earth.”⁹³ Peace is a *conditio sine qua non* for integral human development for a number of reasons. First, peace is necessary for the smooth function of society. Affirmatively, Pope Paul VI argues that,

Peace is, at one and the same time, under different aspects, both the beginning and the end of the normal and progressive development of human society. It is the beginning, that is, the necessary condition: just as a machine cannot work well unless all its parts correspond to the design according to which the machine was invented, so mankind cannot develop efficiently and harmoniously unless peace first gives it its own equilibrium...Peace is also the end, that is, the crowning of the efforts, often hard and painful, by which we seek to subdue the external world to our service, and to organize our society according to an order that reflects justice and well-being.⁹⁴

Second, peace enables the realization of the common good of society which is essential for integral human development. Pope Benedict XVI, reflecting on the connection between peace and the common good maintains that peace is principally the attainment of the common good in society at its different levels which include primary and intermediary, national, international and global levels. He draws the conclusion that the paths which lead to the attainment of the common good are also the paths that must be followed in the pursuit of peace.⁹⁵ Again, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach that Peace is “the destiny of progress, the goal of the great strivings of modern civilization (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, No. 36).”⁹⁶

Third, although peace is not merely the absence of conflicts, in very many ways, the presence of peace depicts the absence of conflicts and creates an environment for development.

Fortunately, the attainment of peace is not a mission impossible, “Peace is not a dream or something utopian; it is possible.”⁹⁷ While this may not be an easy task, it is a realizable mission.

⁹³ Paul VI, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, Peace Depends on You too* (1 January 1974) at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19731208_vii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁹⁴ Paul VI, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, To Be Reconciled With Each Other, To Educate Themselves for Peace* (1 January 1970) at Holy See, https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19691130_iii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁹⁵ Benedict XVI, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, Blessed are the Peacemakers* (1 January 2013) §3, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20121208_xlvi-world-day-peace.html.

⁹⁶ Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of a Day of Peace*, 1 January, 1970.

⁹⁷ Benedict XVI, *Blessed are the Peacemakers*, §3.

However, the attainment of peace demands both commitment and sincerity. Pope Paul VI eloquently teaches,

Peace cannot be based on a false rhetoric of words which are welcomed because they answer to the deep, genuine aspirations of humanity, but which can also serve, and unfortunately have sometimes served, to hide the lack of true spirit and of real intentions for peace, if not indeed to mask sentiments and actions of oppression and party interests. Nor can one rightly speak of peace where no recognition or respect is given to its solid foundations: namely, sincerity, justice and love in the relations between states, and, within the limits of each nation, in the relations of citizens with each other and with their rulers; freedom of individuals and of peoples, in all its expressions, civic, cultural, moral, and religious; otherwise, it is not peace which will exist...⁹⁸

The absence of these elements could endanger peace and also threats to peace. Peace can be threatened in very many ways.

B. Threats to Peace

Peace can be threatened in very many ways. And because peace is about the human person, anything that threatens the tranquil order of the human person becomes also a threat to peace, either internally or externally. Therefore, apart from war and the likes, acts of injustice, inequality, discrimination, hatred and different socio-economic ills including poverty, can constitute grave threats to peace. Pope John Paul II points out that, “the gap between rich and poor has become more marked, even in the most economically developed nations.” Peace, he concludes, is gravely threatened when people live in conditions of extreme poverty.⁹⁹ He strongly argues that “to allow situations of extreme poverty to persist is to create social conditions ever more exposed to the threat of violence and conflict.”¹⁰⁰ Further, Pope John Paul II decries the deplorable conditions of the weakest members of society, including children who find themselves on the margin of civil life in their own countries, and who “in order to survive can rely on nobody except themselves.” Such a situation, he maintains, is “not only an affront to human dignity but also represents a clear threat to

⁹⁸ Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of Peace*, 1 January 1968.

⁹⁹ John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, If you want Peace, Reach out to the Poor* (1 January 1993) §1, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_08121992_xxvi-world-day-for-peace.html.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, §3.

peace.” He therefore, warns that any society no matter its political organization or economic system that does not give constant attention to its weakest members and who fails to do everything possible to ensure that at least their primary needs are satisfied remains fragile and unstable.¹⁰¹

While poverty is itself a threat to peace, for those who live in such conditions to be further exposed to the profligacy of the rich can often lead to agitations and conflicts in the society. Extreme disparity between the rich and the poor and the reckless flaunting of such unjust condition can provoke jealousy and discord, and trigger conflicts.

Injustice, especially, one that is institutionalized, is another grave threat to peace. For peace to be achieved, no segment of the society should be deprived of its fair share of human wellbeing or the means and opportunity to development. To deny the means of achieving development to any sector of a given society, can only lead to insecurity and social unrest. Such denial can also breed hatred and division that destroys the hope for peace.¹⁰²

C. Peace and Dialogue

Peace is both the fruit of and the pathway to dialogue. This fact is reinforced by Pope John Paul II who maintains that,

Peace will not be established, nor will it be maintained, unless one takes the means. And the means par excellence is adopting an attitude of dialogue, that is, of patiently introducing the mechanisms and phases of dialogue wherever peace is threatened or already compromised, in families, in society, between countries or between blocs of countries.¹⁰³

As earlier considered, dialogue leads to discoveries, and the more people are able to “discover” one another, the more they are able to replace the tensions of the past with bonds of peace.¹⁰⁴ True

¹⁰¹ Ibid., §3.

¹⁰² John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace on Development and Solidarity: Two keys to Peace* (1 January 1987) §6, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19861208_xx-world-day-for-peace.html.

¹⁰³ John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace, Dialogue for Peace, A challenge for our Time* (1 January 1983) §1, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19821208_xvi-world-day-for-peace.html.

¹⁰⁴ John Paul II, *Message for the Celebration of the Day of Peace on Peace is a Value with no Frontiers, North-South, East-West: Only One Peace* (1 January 1986) §4, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19851208_xix-world-day-for-peace.html.

dialogue is, therefore, an essential condition for peace¹⁰⁵ in the same way that peace engenders dialogue. Whenever peace is threatened, one must seek the path of peace through dialogue and not through violence, as violence has never resolved any conflict. Violence may achieve momentary calm and a semblance of peace which in due time may only explode beyond controllable proportion, but dialogue can engender true peace and progress. Affirmatively, Paul VI warns that “no precarious truce, unstable equilibrium, fear of reprisals and revenge, successful conquest or fortunate arrogance, can guarantee a Peace worthy of that name. Peace must be willed. Peace must be loved. Peace must be produced.”¹⁰⁶ The willing of, and the production of peace, demand, even much more than dialogue, an intentionality in the pursuit of justice.

D. Justice and Peace

Peace is rooted in justice. In fact, peace and justice share an inseparable reciprocal bond: “Justice is the preemptive condition for peace, and peace is the preemptive condition for justice.”¹⁰⁷ Therefore, any notion of peace that does not embrace justice is both incomplete and utopic. This truism is at the basis of Pope Paul VI’s teaching that justice is the foundation for peace. As such, all who are desirous of achieving peace must work for justice. In his famous dictum, he admonishes, “if you want peace work for justice.”¹⁰⁸ There is a great rationale for this conclusion. If we accept Thomas’s notion of justice as *perpetua et constans voluntas ius suum unicuique tribuens* (rendering to everyone what is due to them),¹⁰⁹ it follows that when we deny the other what is due to him or her, in other words, when we become unjust, and carry out acts of injustices, we upset the just order of society and by that upset the order of peace.

There cannot be peace in situations of injustice, for injustice itself constitutes grave threat to

¹⁰⁵ John Paul II, *Dialogue for Peace, A challenge for our Time*, §1.

¹⁰⁶ Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of a Day of Peace* (1 January 1969) at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19681208_ii-world-day-for-peace.html

¹⁰⁷ “On Justice and Peace,” Global Ministries, accessed March 28, 2019, https://www.globalministries.org/on_justice_and_peace.

¹⁰⁸ Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of a Day of Peace* (1 January 1972) at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_p-vi_mes_19711208_v-world-day-for-peace.html.

¹⁰⁹ *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 58, a. 1

peace and makes the realization of peace impossible. Acts of injustice such as marginalization, oppression, inequitable distribution of wealth, segregation and discrimination are recipes for conflicts. They both upset the interior ordinance of peace in the victim and undercut the just ordering of society.

In addition, peace as earlier defined, is not the mere absence of war, neither does peace entail the mere avoidance of conflicts. It is not merely passive. Peace is also an active force, which demands the building of structures of justice and the dismantling of structures of injustice. It requires the correction of abuses and the preservation of the rights of all within the society. Accordingly, Pope Paul VI points out that,

Where Human Rights are not respected, defended and promoted, where violence or fraud is done to man's inalienable freedoms, where his personality is ignored or degraded, where discrimination, slavery or intolerance prevail, there true Peace cannot be. Peace and Rights are reciprocally cause and effect, the one of the other: Peace favours Rights, and Rights in their turn favour Peace.¹¹⁰

It is incumbent on all, in justice, to therefore help in the preservation of the rights of others. This demands a joint effort, in solidarity.

F. Peace and Solidarity

Peace is a gift generously offered to humanity by God for the good of humanity. The demand of peace is therefore one that is not confined within the sphere of the individual. Everyone who is part of creation is called to become an authentic harbinger of peace not just to oneself, but, in solidarity, to all co-tenants of God's creation. Succinctly put, genuine peace is not sought for personal comfort. Genuine peace is designed to reach out to others and for the welfare of others. According to Obiora Ike, "Peace has personal, familial and communitarian aspects."¹¹¹ It is a universal project that requires the contribution of all, and consequently, incumbent on all to be

¹¹⁰ Paul VI, *Message for the Observance of a Day of Peace* (1 January 1969).

¹¹¹ Obiora Ike, "Addressing issues of Reconciliation Justice and Peace in the Church and in the World," A Paper presented at the First Nsukka Catholic Diocesan Synod: "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism" (Ephesians 4:5), Enugu, Nigeria, April, 14' 2010, <https://www.obioraike.com/docs/addressing-issues-of-reconciliation-justice-and-peace-in-the-church-and-in-the-world.pdf>.

part of the peace in the community and in the world, thereby making the universe a more peaceful place for the good of all and sundry, and for the development of all.

III. Solidarity and Economic Sustainability

The concept of solidarity is multifaceted. It is a virtue, a principle, a duty and an attitude. The Catechism considers solidarity in two complementary dimensions: as a moral virtue and a social principle.¹¹² As a moral virtue, solidarity is an authentic virtue, a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good. This is to say, the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. It is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far.¹¹³

Solidarity becomes a social principle once it reaches the domain of justice which according to St. Thomas Aquinas, as earlier considered, is *perpetua et constans voluntas ius suum unicuique tribuens*.¹¹⁴ Its social dimension makes solidarity a virtue that is “directed par excellence to the common good,” and is found in “commitment to the good of one’s neighbor with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to ‘lose oneself’ for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, to serve him instead of oppressing him for one’s own advantage.”¹¹⁵ Solidarity for John Paul II is the virtue for social life. The principle of solidarity, vehemently opposes any form of oppression, exploitation, objectification, commodification or weaponization of any human person, especially, the disadvantaged of the society. In fact, solidarity demands that the weakest of the society must be treated with greater care and dignity.

Donal Dorr adds that solidarity is an “attitude of commitment to the good of one’s neighbor,

¹¹² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, §193.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹¹⁴ S. Thomae de Aquino, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 58, a. 1 (Ottawa, Canada: Commissio Piana, 1941), 1718a.

¹¹⁵ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, §193

coupled with the readiness to sacrifice oneself in the service of the other.”¹¹⁶ John Paul II expounds that, in solidarity, we must consider,

The “other”-whether a person, people or nation-not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our “neighbor,” a “helper” (cf. Gen 2:18-20), to be made a sharer on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.¹¹⁷

In the sight of God, all are equal and uniquely important. Consequently, the rich and powerful must see themselves as custodians of God’s gifts which must be utilized for the good of the poor. They must recognize that they are also dependent on the poor in so many ways.

Solidarity evokes the sense of interdependence, collaboration and interconnectivity among people of the same society or within the human family. Solidarity speaks to the realization of the radical interdependence of humanity both in their origin and destiny. It is the celebration of the self-evident fact that we are all “partners” in the business of converting oxygen (O₂) to carbon dioxide (CO₂); we live and die together, on the same planet Earth! Created in the image of God, all humans have a common destiny. John Paul II, echoing the sentiments of the Bishops of Africa during the Second Synod of the African Bishops, teaches that “the theme of solidarity reaches beyond the Christian community, to fellow humans who share human life together and the vision of God and a responsibility for our common good.”¹¹⁸ He also maintains that this radical interconnectivity beckons everyone to be involved in joint welfare of the other. It is self-evident that no one is equipped to be an island. The Catechism explains that “On coming into the world, man is not equipped with everything he needs for developing his bodily and spiritual life. He needs others.”¹¹⁹ In as much as humanity is a community, humanity is wired for solidarity, a solidarity that leads to the full realization of the wellbeing of all, and without which society falls apart. Hence, solidarity is a

¹¹⁶ Gregory Baum and Robert Ellsberg, *The Logic of Solidarity: Commentaries on Pope John Paul II’s Encyclical “On Social Concern”* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 148.

¹¹⁷ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §39.

¹¹⁸ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa* (14 September 1995) §138, at Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html.

¹¹⁹ CCC, 1936.

concept which, on the one hand “seeks equality, but on the other hand expresses a loving bondedness among its members.”¹²⁰ Solidarity eschews egocentrism and promotes the common good. Apart from promoting unity that is necessary for growth, solidarity also provides a way of overcoming socio-economic problems.¹²¹

A. Solidarity and Development

Solidarity is imperative for development. This truism permeates a vast number of social and doctrinal documents of the Church, including council decrees, encyclicals of popes and communiques of episcopal conferences. Two prominent figures who are at the forefront of showing the intrinsic link between solidarity and development are Popes Paul VI and John Paul II.

John Paul II maintains that in order for development to be considered genuine, it must be considered within the framework of solidarity.¹²² This claim is premised on the teaching of Pope Paul VI who had taught that the goal of genuine development is not simply the good of the total person, but the good of all persons. Genuine development for Paul VI takes into cognizance the good of every member of society and must be seen in the concern for the wellbeing of all.¹²³

Pope Paul VI insists that “Nations are the architects of their own development, and they must bear the burden of this work; but they cannot accomplish it if they live in isolation from others.”¹²⁴ This sentiment is echoed by Pope John Paul II who argues that “the obligation to commit oneself to the development of peoples is not just an individual duty, and still less an individualistic one as if it were possible to achieve this development through the isolated efforts of each individual.” He maintains that “It is an imperative which obliges each and every man and woman, as well as societies and nations.”¹²⁵ Therefore, integral development is only achieved when all collaborate and

¹²⁰ James Keenan, “Proposing Cardinal Virtues,” *Theological Studies* 56, no. 4 (December, 1995): 721, <http://cdn.theologicalstudies.net/56/56.4/56.4.5.pdf>.

¹²¹ Aquilina, *The Social Doctrine*, 105.

¹²² Baum and Ellsberg, *The Logic of Solidarity*, 14.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹²⁴ Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, §76.

¹²⁵ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §32.

work together in solidarity, not for the comfort of some individuals but for the genuine progress of all, both the rich and the poor.

B. Solidarity between the Rich and the Poor

Paul VI sees the poor as those who are socially and economically disadvantaged, and who as a consequence of their status, suffer oppression and powerlessness. He invites all to show a preferential love for them, knowing that their needs and rights are given special attention in God's eyes.¹²⁶ The virtue of solidarity calls on all to take their place besides the poor and to satisfy their just demands for the common good.¹²⁷ The invitation of Stan Chu Ilo is poignant, "we are all called to mutual sharing in a world where many people are still on the margins of the good life, and where many are still starving of the basic necessities of life..."¹²⁸

Nevertheless, we must emphasize that solidarity with the poor does not mean condescending wherein the poor is seen as some kind of conscience haunting spectacle that needs to be assisted. Solidarity in such a distorted sense benefits not the poor but the rich who get a sense of vague or illusive gratification and satisfaction for extending some pseudo-helping hand. Solidarity, Ilo insists, must be concrete. It is "the concrete involvement in the eradication of human suffering caused by sin and the active effort to change the social, economic, juridical, and political structures which create conditions for suffering, inequality, and poverty."¹²⁹ True solidarity beckons the rich and powerful to first recognize the humanity of the poor and the weak. No one should be made to believe that he or she is peripheral to life.

More urgently, those who have become insensitive to the needs of the poor are invited to have a deep rethink and listen to the voice of conscience and reason and, shunning the evasive attitude of Cain who rejected his brother (Genesis 4:9), become their brothers and sisters keepers.

¹²⁶ Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971) § 23, at The Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html

¹²⁷ Kenneth Himes, O.F.M., *Modern Catholic Social Teaching* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018), 441.

¹²⁸ Stan Chu Ilo, *The Church and Development in Africa: Aid and Development from the Perspective of Catholic Social Ethics* (Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2011), 68.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 68.

The exercise of solidarity according to John Paul II, becomes valid in society when members of such society recognize one another as persons. More specifically, he adds that those who are more influential and more powerful, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker members of the society and be ready to share with them all they possess.¹³⁰

In addition, the interdependence of humanity demands that the rich and powerful of society recognize, in humility, their dependence on those who may be considered the very weak of society. In fact, as St. Paul admonishes, society must be able to take greater care of those members who are considered less privileged,

The parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together (I Corinthians 12:22-26).

The book of Sirach also highlights this interdependence of the so-called insignificant people of society and the rich. The author, reflecting on those viewed in its milieu as the low-level members of society, challenges the powerful to the fact that such people as artists and craftsmen, the blacksmith and the potter, are vital for the smooth running of the society or even for the existence of those considered rich and powerful.

These people are skilled with their hands, each of them an expert at his own craft. Without such people there could be no cities; no one would live or visit where these services were not available. These people are not sought out to serve on the public councils, and they never attain positions of great importance. They do not serve as judges, and they do not understand legal matters. They have no education and are not known for their wisdom. You never hear them quoting proverbs. But the work they do holds this world together. When they do their work, it is the same as offering prayer (Sirach 38: 27-34).

¹³⁰ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §39.

With regard to particular ways in which the rich and powerful can be in solidarity with the poor and their organizations for the goal of transforming the world, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) has outlined the following principles:

Being present with and listening to the poor; developing a critical analysis of the economic, political and social structures that cause poverty; making judgements in the light of Gospel principles; stimulating creative thought and action regarding alternative visions and models for social and economic development; and acting in solidarity with community-based movements.¹³¹

These are valid guidelines for all times and places, and provide a workable path to addressing the needs of the poor and needy of society.

C. Solidarity Among the Poor

The poor are not passive agents of social transformation and economic sustainability. They have great roles to play and resources to contribute. They therefore, are entitled to occupying the driver-seats of their own destiny. In this regard, Pope John Paul II calls on “those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity” not to “adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights...do what they can for the good of all.”¹³² In the same vein, the CCCC also teaches that “poor people themselves, as part of their quest for respect and dignity, must take center stage, organize themselves, and become the architects of authentic solutions to their plight.”¹³³

The marginalized and the poor, therefore, must be in solidarity with one another. That is the only way in which they can bring down these structures of oppression and exploitation. The onus also lies on the poor to refuse attempts to be weaponized by the rich against each other and in perpetuating and protecting the same structures of oppression that keep them impoverished. Fortunately, there is a growing awareness among the poor of the need for an intra-solidarity. John Paul II recognized this effort when he noted that,

¹³¹ Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Pastoral Letter by the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs on the Elimination of Poverty, *The Struggle Against Poverty: A Sign of Hope in our World*, § IV (Ottawa, Ontario: CCCC Publications, 1996).

¹³² John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §39.

¹³³ CCCC, *The Struggle Against Poverty*, § IV.

Positive signs in the contemporary world are the growing awareness of the solidarity of the poor among themselves, their efforts to support one another, and their public demonstrations on the social scene which, without recourse to violence, present their own needs and rights in the face of the inefficiency or corruption of the public authorities.¹³⁴

A great fruit of such collaborative efforts among the poor and those considered less privileged is the dismantling of oppressive structures of impoverishment and the promotion of true peace and development in solidarity.

D. Solidarity and Peace

There are mutual reciprocity between peace and solidarity. Peace is dependent on solidarity: “the fruit of solidarity is peace, an inestimable good for peoples and nations in every part of the world.”¹³⁵ When people work in solidarity, there is peace in the society. And when there is peace in the society, the environment is made conducive to solidarity. While addressing the need for the abandonment of the politics of “to your tents oh Israel,”¹³⁶ both at the national and international level, Pope John Paul II highlights the gluing effect of solidarity:

The solidarity which we propose is the path to peace and at the same time to development. For world peace is inconceivable unless the world's leaders come to recognize that interdependence in itself demands the abandonment of the politics of blocs, the sacrifice of all forms of economic, military or political imperialism, and the transformation of mutual distrust into collaboration. This is precisely the act proper to solidarity among individuals and nations.¹³⁷

The fathers of the Second Vatican Council also emphasized the necessity of solidarity for peace when they contended that:

Peace on earth cannot be obtained unless personal well-being is safeguarded and men freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their inner spirits and their talents. A firm determination to respect other men and peoples and their dignity, as well as the studied practice of brotherhood are absolutely necessary for the establishment of peace.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §39.

¹³⁵ John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa*, §138

¹³⁶ 1 Kings 12:16

¹³⁷ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, §39.

¹³⁸ Vatican Council II. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (December 7 1965) §77, at Holy See, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

Again, the Catechism expresses great confidence in the principle of solidarity. Highlighting its role in the resolution of socio-economic challenges, the Catechism teaches: “Socio-economic problems can be resolved only with the help of all the forms of solidarity.” The Catechism enumerates these forms of solidarity to include: “solidarity of the poor among themselves, between rich and poor, of workers among themselves, between employers and employees in a business and solidarity among nations and peoples.”¹³⁹ And the Catechism adds, International solidarity is a requirement of the moral order; world peace depends in part upon this.¹⁴⁰

There is a fundamental connection between dialogue, peace, and solidarity. Peace and solidarity are important fruits of dialogue, and dialogue is essential for peace and solidarity. It is only through dialogue that conflict-torn nations such as Nigeria, can achieve peace and begin to work in solidarity for economic sustainability and the common good for all. The above theological foundation which draws from Catholic Social Teaching provides great resources for achieving the vision of national integration and economic sustainability. In the next chapter, we shall explore in very concrete ways, how the theological foundations of dialogue, peace, and solidarity, can provide legitimate paths for economic sustainability in Nigeria.

¹³⁹ CCC, 1941

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

Chapter Three

Dialogue for Peace and Solidarity: Imperatives for Economic Sustainability in Nigeria

In the penultimate chapter, I have demonstrated that CST offers rich and practical insights for the realization of sustainable development. In this chapter, I shall focus on the importance of CST for socio-economic development in Nigeria. Today more than ever, there is a growing interest on what CST can offer for sustainable development in Nigeria. This interest is both punctual and relevant. The turn to CST is based upon the proven failure of several economic theories foisted on Nigeria over the last five decades by such global organizations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

One of the economic theories which plunged Nigeria into deep economic quagmire in the 1980s and which she has not yet fully recovered from today, is the neo-Keynesian economic theory. This theory, as some renowned Nigerian ethicists and economists have observed, metamorphosed into the neoliberal theory whose first principle is a mono-economics, which insists on the “universality of rational economic behavior and the existence of marginal substitution possibilities in production and consumption.”¹⁴¹ By default, it relies heavily on market forces, and minimal government interventions, especially in the provision of infrastructure and education, with the goal of rolling back state involvement while unleashing the market.

This theory was behind the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), an economic reform initiated by the IMF and World Bank.¹⁴² It was introduced into Nigeria by the former Military Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, in 1986. According to Gen. Babangida himself, the objectives of the SAP program among others was to:

¹⁴¹ Odozor, “Truly Africa, and Wealthy,” 279.

¹⁴² Danladi Abah and Peter Naankiel, “Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria and its Implication on Socio-Economic Development, 1980-1995,” *The Calabar Historical Journal* 6, no.2 (December 2016): 3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318755508_Structural_Adjustment_Programme_in_Nigeria_and_its_Implications_on_Socio-Economic_Development_1980-1995.

Reduce the preponderance of unproductive investments in the public sector; to achieve viable balance of payment; to reduce dependence on oil and on imports by restructuring and diversifying the productive base of the economy, achieve fiscal and balance payment viability and improve efficiency through private-led development.¹⁴³

However, in order to effectively achieve these objectives, the IMF outlined several obligatory conditions such as the adoption of ‘appropriate’ pricing policies in all sectors with greater reliance on market forces, the restructuring of the public sector through privatization and removal of subsidies, trade liberalization,¹⁴⁴ the abolition of agricultural marketing boards, reductions of government employees, and the devaluation of the Nigerian currency (Naira).¹⁴⁵

Needless to say, from the point of view of many Nigerians and as demonstrated by the unpleasant consequences that ensued, the SAP program was a failure on many fronts, including economic and political. The list is endless: huge retrenchment of workers and wage cuts which led to the inability of many families to afford the basic necessities of life, skyrocketing of inflation which was caused by currency devaluation and heightened unemployment,¹⁴⁶ social insecurity, and to a large extent, it led to the collapse of the Nigerian state and created a fertile ground for ethno-religious manipulations.¹⁴⁷ Again, while promoting the upsurge of monstrous projects, it concomitantly led to a significant withdrawal of government interest in social services and educational programs and bred an abysmal level of corruption. As Obiora rightly reveals, it led to a situation in which the socio-economic triangle got much narrower at the apex denoting a small fabulously rich minority, while concomitantly getting broader at the base denoting a mass exodus of the greater majority into a poverty trapezium from which no escape seemed likely.¹⁴⁸

The failure of SAP and other similar economic theories in Nigeria can be attributed to a

¹⁴³ Eucharia Nwabugo Nwagbara, ‘The Story of Structural Adjustment Programme in Nigeria from the Perspective of Organized Labour,’ *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 1 no.7 (October 2011):32-33, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/87f1/a51efb1fc947a7354a0865350db305f5232b.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Nwagbara, “The Story of Structural,” 32-33.

¹⁴⁵ Abah and Naankiel, “Structural Adjustment,” 7.

¹⁴⁶ Nwagbara, “The Story of Structural,” 30.

¹⁴⁷ Abah and Naankiel, “Structural Adjustment,” 2.

¹⁴⁸ Obiora Ike, “African Renaissance: Solidarity and Renewal within Africa Today,” A paper presented at the Conference on Solidarity with Africa, Institute for Church Life, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA, September 23, 2003, <http://www.obioraike.com/docs/african-renaissance-solidarity-and-renewal-within-africa-today.pdf>.

number of factors, but most significantly, is their reliance on a notion of development that depended on complex economic systems that were not adapted to the Nigerian context and that in many ways ignored the greatest resource for sustainable development – human capital. As this thesis has argued strongly in the previous chapter, at the center of economic development is the human person and the conditions that are essential for the realization of his/her flourishing.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section investigates the notion of development and economic prosperity in Nigeria from the standpoint of CST. In the second section, I will focus on the relationship between peace and economic sustainability in Nigeria. The third section examines the value of dialogue in Nigeria from the purview of CST. In the fourth section, we shall examine solidarity and the common good as imperatives for economic sustainability in Nigeria.

I. Rethinking the Notion of Development and Economic Prosperity in Nigeria

As earlier argued, Economic prosperity cannot be circumscribed to the construction of monstrous infrastructures, foreign exchange reserve or even the status of Nigeria's GDP. While all these indicators are important, the health of Nigeria's economy cannot be gauged simply by them. Integral to genuine economic development is the wellbeing of all Nigerians. Pope Paul VI's invitation in his encyclical, *Populorum Progressio*, for a rethinking of the concept of development that is operative in the world of economic and political theorists is one that is rationally cogent for the Nigerian context. Again, John Paul II's accentuation of development in terms of health, hygiene, life expectancy, availability of water and other economic indicators provide an important focus for Nigeria's goal of economic sustainability. In the light of the above, economic planners in Nigeria at the Federal, State and Local government levels must rethink of their conceptualization of development.

To be truly developed, the government of Nigeria must be at the forefront of providing support for the poorest and most vulnerable members of the society. It must invest in basic amenities of life such as food, water, safe and affordable housing. The government must also invest in

education and youth empowerment programs, the creation of employment, affordable health care, and social determinants of health such as sanitation, public safety, availability of healthy food and local efficient health emergency systems. Without these provisions, Nigeria cannot be said to be developed, and economic sustainability in Nigeria will remain a dream.

Nigeria as a nation has the wherewithal to make the above opportunities available to the masses. But sadly, the realization of the goal of economic sustainability in Nigeria is still very much within the realms of wishes and desires. The reason is not far-fetched. As argued in the first chapter, the average Nigerian leader today is drenched in a deep egocentrism, one that vitiates the realization of the common good. Yet, even the above is only a symptom of a more fundamental problem, namely, the misconstrued notion of economic prosperity.

For many Nigerians today, economic prosperity simply means how much one has in his or her bank account, the infinite seemingly number of cars one can acquire in a finite lifetime, the number of houses one possesses in different states of the federation and of course, in the federal capital, as well as the infinite personal financial reserves in and outside the country and other kinds of materialistic flamboyant recklessness. There is no doubt that this notion of success and economic prosperity inflicts grave harm on the nation, but more specifically to the poor since it leads to an unbridled quest for wealth which then leads to exploitation and embezzlement of public funds and the hoarding of the wealth of the nation. Cases abound where certain government officials who can better be described as brigands in power, amass wealth for themselves and their progeny yet unborn while a majority of the Nigerian populace wallows in poverty and squalor. This state of affairs is not only unjust, but audacious heartlessness.

In many cases, monies earmarked for the construction of social amenities meant to benefit the populace are diverted into personal accounts by greedy public officials. The following examples of reckless and brazen assault on the nation's treasury show why Nigeria remains a nation "sweating under the rains."

General Sani Abacha, who ruled Nigeria under a military dictatorship from 1993 until he died in 1998, has become a notorious household name in Nigeria for his looting spree. For over a decade after his death, Nigeria has yet to repatriate all the looted funds traced to him and his family. In fact, the enormity of his loots necessitated the intervention of the World Bank. In 2006, the World Bank provided institutional support for Nigeria for the sustainable use of repatriated funds from Abacha. The total amount stashed away in Switzerland alone amounted to approximately \$723 million.¹⁴⁹ Right up to the year 2017, Nigeria was still recovering the loot from Abacha and his family. In 2017, the Federal Government of Nigeria announced that it had signed an MoU with various international financial agencies on how to repatriate about \$300m loot stashed in various banks elsewhere including \$1.6m in the United States, £21.7m in one bank in the United Kingdom, \$299m in Jersey, a town in an island of the United Kingdom and \$145m in France.¹⁵⁰

But the late General Abacha is not alone in this decadent rascality mixed with wickedness. In 2012, a former Governor of Delta state, one of Nigeria's oil states, Mr. James Ibori, pleaded guilty to fraud and money laundering in the United Kingdom, having stolen from Nigeria's public fund an estimated amount of \$250Million.¹⁵¹ This said amount is only in relations to his financial activities in the UK. There is evidence that Mr. Ibori has other financial transactions in the US and other parts of the world.¹⁵² Again, Diezani Alison-Madueke, a former Minister of Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was being questioned by the Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on the whereabouts of about N47.2 billion and \$487.5 million in cash and property traced to her both within and outside the country. In addition, Nigeria's former National Security Adviser, Colonel Sambo Dasuki (retired) is on trial for allegedly

¹⁴⁹ "World Bank Monitoring of Repatriated Abacha Funds," The World Bank, last modified December 4, 2017, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/factsheet/2017/12/04/world-bank-monitoring-of-repatriated-abacha-funds>.

¹⁵⁰ Ade Adesomoju, "Nigeria, US sign agreement on return of \$300m Abacha, Alamieyeseigha's loot –AGF," *Punch Newspaper*, December 9, 2017, <https://punchng.com/nigeria-us-sign-agreement-on-return-of-300m-abacha-alamieyeseighas-loot-agf/>.

¹⁵¹ Mark Tran, "Former Nigeria State Governor James Ibori Receives 13-Year Sentence," *The Guardian*, April 17, 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2012/apr/17/nigeria-governor-james-ibori-sentenced>.

¹⁵² Ibid.

masterminding the diversion of \$2billion in security funds into his personal accounts and to various political cronies of the past administration of President Goodluck Jonathan.¹⁵³

To imagine that these massive thefts of security funds linked to Col. Dasuki, Nigeria's security chief, were contrived and executed at a time when Nigeria was brought on its knees by the dangerous Boko Haram terrorist organization defies every human reasoning. And to imagine that within this period, many Nigerian soldiers lost their lives as a result of inferior military wares or even total unavailability of military equipment for confronting Boko Haram suggests nothing but a manifest display of wickedness. More sadly is the fact that if properly channeled, these loots would have provided stability and security to Nigeria amidst the intractable conflicts that continue to threaten the unity, peace and economic development of Nigeria.

II. Conflicts, Peace and Economic Sustainability in Nigeria

Investing in peace and stability is fundamental to long-term development and prosperity in Nigeria. While it is impossible to articulate the exact human and material cost of conflicts the deleterious effects of conflicts in Nigeria on economic development are overwhelming. Fr. George Ehusani contends that as a result of violent conflicts, Nigeria has witnessed,

Scores of thousands of internally displaced persons (or refugees), moving from North to South or squatting for prolonged periods in police and army barracks all over the place. Cameroon, Chad and Niger now play host to hundreds of thousands of refugees who have fled from their now inhospitable homeland. Indeed many Nigerians have suffered emotional, psychological, economic and social trauma and dislocation on account of these crises, with little or nothing in the form of compensation from the authorities. The unfortunate impression has been left in the minds of many Nigerians that human life here is cheap, very cheap, and easily expendable.¹⁵⁴

All these negatively impact economic development in Nigeria. More particularly, a cursory look at the effects of Boko Haram in one of the states in the North-East of Nigeria can further provide insights into the unimaginable cost of conflicts, and reveals very sadly why countries

¹⁵³ "Improving U.S. Anticorruption Policy in Nigeria," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified July 11, 2016, <https://www.cfr.org/report/improving-us-anticorruption-policy-nigeria>.

¹⁵⁴ Ehusani, *Peacebuilding and Democratic Consolidation*.

faced with violent conflicts are unable to enjoy sustainable development.

Conor Gaffey writes that apart from the human costs of Boko Haram insurgency, it “has destroyed \$5.2 billion worth of Property in Borno State, North-East Nigeria, alone.”¹⁵⁵ This large-scale economic cost translates to destroyed social services, lost economic opportunities, and depleted social capital. Mr. Yerima Saleh, the Permanent Secretary of the Borno States Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Resettlement revealed that Boko Haram has,

Razed almost 1 million properties, including more than 986,000 residential homes; 5,335 classrooms; and over 200 health facilities and hospitals... more than 1,600 water facilities; 726 power stations and transformers; and 800 public service structures, including police stations and prisons.¹⁵⁶

To imagine that this revelation reflects only the cost for one state of the Federation shows how enormous the impact of violence can be on the entire nation. No nation can become economically prosperous with the above economic and social indices. Therefore, there is no gainsaying that for Nigeria to achieve economic sustainability, peace and security must be prioritized.

Surprisingly, a critical assessment of the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) published by the Federal Government of Nigeria reveals that security and peace are completely missing on the list of key Executive priorities in the plan.¹⁵⁷ One wonders if the Nigerian government is unable to make the connection and understand that peace leads to stability, and stability is necessary for economic development. Again, although the ERGP speaks about improving the business environment in Nigeria, it points only to business policies, more transparent regulations and other factors, yet it fails to acknowledge that without peace and security, Nigeria cannot become an attractive destination for business. No investor will establish a business apparatus in a country that experiences incessant conflict. Even before the estimation of the prospects of profit, the first question on the minds of business investors is generally: “is the country safe?” Consequently, one of the first

¹⁵⁵ Conor Gaffey, "Cost of Terrorism: Boko Haram has Destroyed \$5.2 Billion Worth of Property in Just One State in Nigeria," *Newsweek*, August 9, 2017, <https://www.newsweek.com/cost-terrorism-boko-haram-nigeria-648854>.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Nigeria, *Economic Recovery*, 29.

steps to making Nigeria a more business-friendly country is to establish peace and stability.

Peace in Nigeria is a non-negotiable need and indeed, the first and foremost requirement for any economic investments, which are essential for sustainability. Given that the two major sources of conflicts in Nigeria are ethnicity and religion, there is an urgent need for ethnic and religious dialogue.

III. Dialogue for Economic Sustainability in Nigeria

In a multi-ethnic and religious environment like Nigeria, the value of dialogue is paramount. In addressing the question of dialogue in Nigeria, Obiora argues that dialogue, which is a veritable tool for arriving at a common ground in the search for truth without necessarily compromising one's own position, minimizes the urge for the use of violence and other means in the settlement of issues.¹⁵⁸ This position has frequently been acknowledged by the Catholic bishops of Nigeria who insist that, "most of the problems causing conflicts in the nation can be prevented, and what has gone wrong put right if there is a commitment to dialogue. Authentic democracy entails a culture of dialogue."¹⁵⁹ Given the different sources and levels of conflicts in Nigeria, different forms of dialogue are necessary and inevitable for peace and economic sustainability. Nigeria must be more intentional in the pursuance of dialogue for life, religions dialogue, ethnic dialogue, and dialogue of action. This work firmly maintains that a commitment to dialogue will not only lead to peace but will inspire solidarity.

Dialogue for life in the Nigerian society must become not the exception but the norm for daily interactions. If dialogue is the way of living and a mode of acting, it follows that for Nigeria to be at peace, every Nigerian must cultivate the attitude of dialogue in all segments of his or her life. There have to be legitimate respect and concern for the needs of others and hospitality towards those of other faiths, ethnic groups and political affiliations. Fortunately, both Christianity and Islam speak

¹⁵⁸ Obiora Ike, "Religion and Politics- Perspectives of the Social Teaching of the Church: The Case of Nigeria," A paper presented at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Conference, Berlin, Germany, 2006, <https://www.obioraike.com/docs/religion-and-politics-perspectives-of-the-social-teaching-of-the-church.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ Peter Schineller, S. J. *The Church Teaches: Stand of the Catholic Bishops of Nigeria on Issues of Faith and Life*. (Abuja, Nigeria: Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 2003), 49.

of the value of tolerance and hospitality. The traditional religion in Nigeria also speaks about the value of communality, brotherhood and sisterhood, even to strangers. For the Nigerian Christian, this invitation to constant dialogue is a vocation to which God has called everyone. Dialogue with people of other faiths and ethnic backgrounds, for the Nigerian Christian must be seen as integral to living out the faith. It is a powerful way of bearing witness to the gospel message and as a part of the larger effort of achieving economic sustainability in Nigeria.

Religion is critical to the corporate existence and indeed to the survival of Nigeria as a country.¹⁶⁰ Consequently, given the role that religion has played in fermenting conflicts that have led to the loss of lives and property at various points in Nigeria, the value of religious dialogue cannot be overstressed.

CST offers valuable insights on how religion can be utilized for the betterment of the Nigerian society. CST's emphasis on the fundamental dignity of all persons is important here. Every Nigerian, irrespective of his or her religious affiliation must first recognize the humanity of the other. It is an a priori fact that we are, first, humans before we become affiliated to one religion or the other. For Christians and Muslims who both trace their faith to the same patriarch, Abraham, it becomes even more pertinent that they be united in faith, and should express even greater trust and respect for each other. Yet, this has not always been the case. Most of the conflicts in Nigeria, especially in the North, have been conflicts between Muslims and Christians. These conflicts have had untold consequences for the two religions, particularly with the advent of the Boko Haram terrorist organization.

Consequently, there is a more urgent need for continued interreligious dialogue between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria for the purpose of realizing the goal of peace and economic sustainability. Thankfully, both the leadership of Islam and Christianity and, in particular, the

¹⁶⁰ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, A Communiqué issued at the End of Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, at Domus Pacis Pastoral Centre, Igoba, Akure, Ondo State, 8-16 September, *Religion as Instrument of Peace and Integral Human Development*, (Durumi, Abuja: CBCN Publications, 2016) 2.

Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, drawing inspiration from CST, are at the forefront of inter-religious engagements in Nigeria. These efforts must be encouraged and sustained. A few of these efforts must be highlighted.

At the National level, we have the Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) which was established in 2000 by the joint leadership of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria with the principal purpose of resolving religious conflicts and reducing occasions for misunderstanding. It is co-chaired by the highest-ranking members of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), and the Nigerian National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA). Although the primary reason for the formation of this council as mentioned was the resolution of conflicts between Christians and Muslims, today, this group has metamorphosed into a peacemaking mechanism, strategically creating paths for peaceful coexistence and harmony in various states in Nigeria and within various communities at the state level.¹⁶¹ The leaders have also on different occasions produced joint statements designed for educating their respective members on the need for mutual trust and respect for those of other religions.

There are likewise other peace efforts sponsored by different arms of the Catholic Church in the country. At the National level, the CBCN has established different platforms for Catholic-Muslim dialogue within its interreligious commission. More than everyone else, Cardinal John Onaiyekan has become a symbol of inter-religious dialogue in Nigeria. As a vanguard of peace amongst religions, undeterred by cynicisms of various kinds both within and outside of Christendom, he single-handedly established the Abuja Interfaith Peace-Building Forum (AIPBF). This forum provides the platform for political leaders to come together to proffer solutions to religious conflicts and to create further avenues for discussions on peace building. Again, there is the Women of Faith Network (WFN), an offshoot of Religions for Peace (Abuja Chapter), led by a Catholic nun, Sr. Maria Ifechukwu Udora, DDL. This group provides the forum for both Christian and Muslim women

¹⁶¹ John Cardinal Onaiyekan, *Seeking Common Ground: Inter-Religious Dialogue in Africa*, (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 2013), 61.

to share their thoughts on how they can more effectively become agents of peace in their local communities within the federal capital. Again, Rev. Fr. George Ehusani, a Catholic priest, and Malam Nuruden Lemu, an Islamic cleric, work together under the auspices of Lux Terra Leadership Foundation to promote peace and harmony on a more intellectual level. They bring together leaders from the two major religions to reflect on ways to promote peace and mutual respect and understanding in the country. Similarly, Fr. John-Sixtus Okonkwo, the Catholic youth chaplain of the Catholic Youth Organization of Nigeria, Abuja Chapter, in collaboration with the leadership of the youth wing of Abuja Central Mosque periodically participate in a joint peace tree planting in the capital. Because the youth are often the targets of self-serving politicians, this initiative helps to sow the seed of trust and respect among the youth from both religions. It also prevents them from being weaponized against each other by unscrupulous politicians and clerics.

Outside the Federal Capital, there is the Interfaith Vocational Training Centre for Muslims and Christians, an initiative of Archbishop Ignatius Kaigama, a former President of the CBCN, and the coadjutor Archbishop of Abuja. The aim of this initiative is to curb unemployment, and to promote development in Jos, Plateau State. This initiative has received an overwhelming support from both the Christian religion and the Islamic faith, and has helped to inculcate mutual respect and love among the participants. These are among many of the great efforts in tapping into the good in religion in the promotion of peace and harmony in Nigeria.

Of course, all these efforts do not constitute a magic-wand for instilling peace, especially as there continues to be cases of religious conflicts in various parts of the country. However, we must point out that these efforts have yielded profitable results, especially among the vast majority of the masses. As Onaiyekan rightly observed, the basic message of peace, love, solidarity, and honesty have not been absent in promoting a good society in Nigeria, and it is also a fact that Nigerians generally live in peace with one another across religious lines at the grassroots levels. This peacefulness is evident in the daily interactions of people; in businesses, markets, in the government

offices, in police and military barracks and in the schools, Nigerian Christians and Muslims go about their business, making friends and cooperating with colleagues sometimes even marrying across religious lines.¹⁶² It can, in fact, be argued that largely, the common masses, are not the primary cause of religious conflicts in Nigeria; the politicians and their corruptions are. Many of the religious conflicts in Nigeria today are politically motivated. Some crafty politicians, of whom there are no short supply in Nigeria's ruling class, have mastered the art of weaponizing religion for their self-interests. The Nigerian bishops were onto this fact when they decried the hijacking of religion by some charlatans who continue to exploit religion to further their ambitions and interests.¹⁶³

Making religion a force for good demands concerted efforts from the government and politicians. The Nigerian government must be at the forefront of efforts at maintaining and sustaining peace in Nigeria by first, resisting the temptation to incite religious violence for political gains, especially during elections. Second, they must be willing to support various peace-building structures put in place for inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Third, the Nigerian government should initiate national campaigns that promote the value of religious pluralism and education on religious tolerance. Fourth, the government must be objective and honest in addressing religious issues when they arise, by exposing and bringing to justice the culprits who perpetrate or perpetuate religious bigotry. Finally, the government must be equitable in the provision and distribution of resources and opportunities to the populace. When a particular religion is favored at the detriment of the others, there is bound to be agitations for justice which can often engender conflicts. This fact is captured by Ehusani who rightly asserts that at the root of the crises in Nigeria are the structural injustices and inequalities inherent in Nigeria's political configuration. Hence, he concludes that the realization of peace is only possible through the pursuit of justice:

Peace building extends beyond creating inter-faith, inter-ethnic or inter-communal harmony or the signing of peace-accord between presidential candidates and leaders of political parties in the run up to elections. Peace building includes among other

¹⁶² Ibid., 87.

¹⁶³ CBCN, "Restoring Confidence in Nigeria," 3.

elements addressing very seriously the historical injustices against individuals and groups, whether real or perceived, and the current inequalities and inequities in our socio-political and economic structures arrangements; for lasting peace and the consolidation of democracy cannot be discussed, let alone achieved, in a vacuum. Sustainable peace in the polity, within which context democracy can be truly consolidated, cannot be achieved where a few smart alecks and their friends and family members have seized the key of the national treasury, captured the resources of the land, and live in criminal and provocative opulence, while the vast majority of the population subsist in dehumanising poverty.¹⁶⁴

Similarly, religious leaders have influences on their communities, and as such, have significant roles in peacebuilding. This can be achieved by teaching their adherents to avoid extremism and by inculcating the virtue of respect, tolerance and open-mindedness. Again, religious leaders must divest themselves of any inclinations to become political puppets and mercenaries for implementing the biddings of political cronies. Additionally, they must be willing to come together to create possibilities for inter-religious dialogue. There is also a great need for religious leaders to be more civil in their utterances concerning members of other religions. Many religious conflicts in Nigeria today have been provoked by the unguarded utterances of some religious clerics. Finally, religious leaders must recognize and instill in their adherents the understanding that no matter one's religious affiliation, the common good of all in the society should be protected and never compromised.

It is only in this way that religion can become a great agent of social cohesion and economic development. However, beyond religious dialogue, Nigeria must also tackle the question of ethnic conflict by venturing into ethnic dialogue.

The multi-ethnic configuration of Nigeria ought to be a source of strength and a blessing. However, for the past fifty-nine years after her independence, the reality in Nigeria has demonstrated that in many ways, ethnicity has remained a cog in the wheel of economic development and the bane of Nigeria's journey to nationhood.¹⁶⁵ Mutual distrust and unhealthy ethnic rivalry have remained an

¹⁶⁴ Ehusani, "Peacebuilding and Democratic Consolidation."

¹⁶⁵ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, A Communiqué issued at the End of Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, at the Diocesan Conference Centre, Bishop's Court, Effurun, Delta State, September 11-19, *The Lord Comforts His People! (Isaiah 40:1)*, (Durumi, Abuja: CBCN Publications, 2014) 4.

endemic source of political instability.

Ethnic dialogue in Nigeria will help to remove the cloud of mutual suspicion that exists among various tribes, lead to the appreciation of others no matter their ethnicity and further enrich the perspectives of everyone about the inherent good in different ethnic groups. Here also, we can rely on the insights of CST.

Catholic social teaching advocates that first, every Nigerian, must recognize the humanity in fellow Nigerians. Before any affiliation to a tribe, every Nigerian is primarily, a human person with full dignity and respect, and should be treated as such. Humanity must be prioritized over ethnicity. The recognition of the humanity of the other leads to the appreciation and acknowledgment of the fundamental equality of all, irrespective of the geographical locus. No Nigerian should be considered less human simply because he or she is from a different tribe. And no one should be denied his or her rights and access to full human flourishing simply because he or she belongs to one tribe or another. The right and dignity of every Nigerian should and must be preserved irrespective of his or her tribe.

Regrettably, what Odozor says of Africa applies to Nigeria even in much greater proportion. Odozor argues that “many of Africa’s problems with coexistence among different tribal and ethnic groups can be traced to lack of sincere appreciation of the equal humanity of those who do not belong to “our” group, who are not one of “us.”¹⁶⁶ In Nigeria today, the cry among various tribes remains that of marginalization in the distribution of resources, opportunities and in political appointments. The current political leadership in Nigeria, especially, the President himself, a Muslim from the North, has been accused severally of one-sided political appointments. Within the first year of his assumption to office, over 60% of President Mohammadu Buhari’s political appointments were from the North, and in fact, were members of the same faith, Islam.¹⁶⁷ The CBCN highlighted this attitude in their statement on the state of the nation, during the first year of Buhari’s presidency:

¹⁶⁶ Odozor, “Truly Africa, and Wealthy” 276.

¹⁶⁷ Jude Ndukwe, “Buhari’s Nepotism,” *Today News Africa*, February 28, 2019, <https://todaynewsafrika.com/opinion-buharis-nepotism/>.

The president can no longer safely ignore the very strong allegations of a rise in nepotism and sectionalism in federal appointments. This has further deepened the feelings of alienation and the rise of centrifugal forces that are threatening the foundations of our unity.¹⁶⁸

It is evident that these concerns were not addressed by President Buhari, given that the same concern featured in the CBCN's communique the following year:

There are agitations in many sectors of the country against the one-sidedness in appointments to key institutions and sensitive national offices, against marginalization, and unfair distribution of resources and amenities. There are also allegations of cases of selective application of the rule of law.¹⁶⁹

Again, when, for instance, a government official misappropriates public funds for the development of his or her immediate community, to the detriment of others, ipso facto, such government official believes, whether advertently or inadvertently, that only those from his tribe deserve to flourish and enjoy the benefits of development. This non-recognition of the full humanity of members of other tribes by such acts of misappropriation of public funds for clannish goals has often led to Nigeria's many ethnic clashes, which in many cases begin with agitations of marginalization or injustice from those who feel shortchanged. This view is supported by the CBCN who maintain that the inability of the Nigerian Government to address the inequitable situation in the country has provided breeding ground for violent reactions, protests and agitations.¹⁷⁰

To avert ethnic clashes in Nigeria, there is a pressing need for a re-education of the political class, and the populace. The goal of the re-education should first and foremost be towards the recognition of the humanity in every Nigerian irrespective of tribe or ethnicity. There is also the need for an education for nationalism and patriotism. People should be able to view one another first as Nigerians, before the consideration of ethnicity. Every Nigerian must recognize and pay attention to

¹⁶⁸ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, A Statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria on The State of the Nation, *Restoring Confidence in Nigeria* (Durumi, Abuja: CBCN Publications, 2016)3.

¹⁶⁹ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, A Communique issued at the End of Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, *Our Hope in Despair: Towards National Restoration* (Durumi, Abuja: CBCN Publications, 2017)1.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

that which binds all together as Nigerians first, before tribes. It is only in this way that Nigeria can achieve its desired goal of peace and development.

Very importantly, Government functionaries, civil servants, and politicians in general, must constantly bear in mind that their primary responsibility is to the Nigerian state and not to their tribes. Nigeria must come first, before tribe, for when tribal considerations take the front seat of government interests, instability and distrust are bound to thrive. This lack of attention, inevitably, has deleterious effects in the socio-economic development of the country as it further entrenches rivalry, hatred, and the depletion of the social capital that is required for economic growth. A “to your tent oh Israel” mentality is dangerous for Nigeria’s development. Development, should not be just for one tribe, or one ethnic group, it must be for everybody and for the whole person. All Nigerians must join hands to work for a more prosperous Nigeria, free from conflicts, injustice and scandalous socio-economic conditions. Therefore, there is also the need for a dialogue of works.

Issues of social justice, human rights and impoverishing socio-economic conditions affect every person in the society, no matter his or her religious or ethnic affiliation. It is therefore pertinent that all religions in Nigeria, including NTR, Islam and Christianity, find a way to work together, in addressing the huge socio-economic issues that affect the Nigerian populace. Joint pursuit of justice and better socio-economic conditions can thus build a platform for the achievement of peace and development in Nigeria.

All Nigerians must come together, irrespective of their creed to seek for better conditions of living. Bad roads do not distinguish between Christians and Muslims, Igbos, Hausas or Yorubas as diverse peoples die daily on them. Lack of water in the villages affects people of all faiths. Lack of security on the roads does not distinguish between Christians and Muslims. Lack of electricity and water make no distinction between Christians and Muslims in the community. These needs are why a focus on the common good and not on religious or ethnic affiliations can create a better society where everyone can flourish.

IV. The Common Good and Solidarity in Nigeria, Imperatives for Economic Sustainability

If, as Pope John XXIII maintains, the common good is, the “sum total of all those conditions of social living- economic, political, cultural which will make it possible for women and men to readily and fully achieve the perfection of their humanity,”¹⁷¹ one can safely conclude that the sense of the common good is lacking in many Nigerian leaders. As the bishops of Nigeria point out, “far too many politicians in our country have continued to use politics merely as a platform for self-enrichment, oppression and the pursuit of goals that are totally at variance with our common good, collective well-being and aspirations.”¹⁷²

The Nigerian situation is indeed a pitiable situation where the common good is sacrificed on the altar of personal interests. The cases of Gen. Abacha, Mr. Ibori, Mrs Madueke and Col. Dasuki are clear evidence of this conclusion. As a media group rightly projected, the loot purportedly recovered from Mrs. Madueke alone can fund many projects that would have benefited a majority of the Nigerian population. The group argued that Madueke’s loot can fund six world class airports in the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria and also completed the Lokoja-Kano and Lagos –Calabar rail lines in Nigeria.¹⁷³ It is also mindboggling that in the same year (2012) when Mr. Ibori was convicted of stealing N90 billion (\$250m) from Nigeria, the Delta State, that the approved budget for the state for Education, water resources, health, transportation, agriculture, etc. was a little over N78.7¹⁷⁴ What is evident from the above is that the amount stolen by Mr. Ibori could fund the entire Economic expenditures of the state’s 2012 budget and some of the social expenditures. In fact, the

¹⁷¹ John XXIII, Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961) § 65, at The Holy See, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html.

¹⁷² CBCN, “Restoring Confidence,” 2.

¹⁷³ Agency Report, “What Alison-Madueke’s Loot can Fund in Nigeria,” *Premium Times*, August 10, 2017, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/239807-alison-maduekes-loot-can-fund-nigeria.html>.

¹⁷⁴ “Breakdown Of Proposed Delta State 2013 Budget –By Kenneth Okpara,” Blank News Online, accessed March 1, 2019, <https://blanknewsonline.wordpress.com/2013/01/06/breakdown-of-proposed-delta-state-2013-budget-by-kenneth-okpara/>

total loot could provide over fifty world-class schools in the entire Delta State of Nigeria where these monies were stolen from, with an extra amount to provide good roads, water plants for the entire twenty-five local governments in the state and good hospitals or electricity for the entire state. But these monies were funneled into private accounts.

Over and above the perpetuation of poverty in the country, these acts are blatant assaults on the people, the principle of justice, and the virtue of solidarity. It is a failure to recognize their responsibility towards the poor and the less privileged, and the refusal to see and appreciate the full humanity of others, especially those for whom the resources of the State are designed to aid. It is a grave betrayal of the virtue of solidarity which entails a fundamental recognition that all Nigerians are created equal in the image and likeness of God and, as such, deserve to enjoy, at least, the basic standards of living.

Nigeria cannot achieve its goal of economic sustainability if the leaders do not divest themselves of their egocentric inclinations and become more responsive to the plight of the citizens. In solidarity, the leaders must demonstrate greater care for the poor by not only providing them with the basic means for human flourishing but by refusing all forms of outrageous enrichment of themselves with the resources of the poor. The book of Sirach warns, “a meagre diet is the very life of the poor, to deprive them of it is to commit murder. To take away a fellow-man's livelihood is to kill him, to deprive an employee of his wages is to shed blood” (Sirach 34:21-22). The rich must recognize the humanity of the poor and be willing to alleviate their pain and suffering even when it requires sacrificing their comfort in order for poor Nigerians to enjoy the basic needs of life. It is indeed atrocious and defies all sense of human solidarity that in a country where the majority of the populace are deprived of potable water, quality education, power, housing, and even good roads, the leaders are swimming in affluence.

More pitifully, this injustice has been infused into the Nigerian political structure. The huge

monthly paycheck politicians doll out to themselves are scandalous. This point is aptly articulated by the bishops of Nigeria:

There are instances of enormous sums of money paid as allowances to public office holders (in addition to their already high basic salaries) and of legislators passing bills in view of future pension benefits for themselves and members of the executive arm of government. It is regrettable that this is happening in a nation where a large percentage of the population is living in dehumanizing poverty, where so many workers are not paid the recommended basic salary, and where massive decay of infrastructure has put much stress on the citizens and their lives in great danger. This situation is unjustifiable. It also represents a gross injustice against the poor.¹⁷⁵

In a country where over 80% of the masses live under \$2.00 per day, it is criminal for the senators to receive the sum of 14.25 million naira per month. This is slightly less than \$40,000 per month and slightly less than \$480,000 per year.¹⁷⁶ It is quite ironic that Nigeria, the poverty capital of the world, pays her senators higher than their counterparts in the rest of the world: United Kingdom (average equivalent is (\$105,400), the United States (\$174,000), France (\$85,900), South Africa (\$104,000), Kenya (\$74,500), Saudi Arabia (\$64,000) and Brazil (\$157,600).¹⁷⁷ From the above, we can conclude that in a year, the 106 senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria spend \$50,880,000 on themselves while the poor continue to roast in misery. As Emmanuel Mayah and Celestine Okwudili Odo rightly argued, the total salary paid to Nigerian House of Representative members for a year can,

Create 1,054 microfinance banks with a capital base of N1bn each in all 774 local government areas to grant rural entrepreneurs and farmers access to loans, thereby creating jobs for at least 500 young people in every local government - a total of 387,000 jobs.¹⁷⁸

Further, the total salary for Nigerian senators in a year can,

¹⁷⁵ Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, A Communiqué issued at the End of Second Plenary Meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, at the Pastoral Centre, Igwuruta, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, September 10- 18, *A Call to True Conversion of Heart*, (Durumi, Abuja: CBCN Publications, 2015) 3.

¹⁷⁶ "Uproar over Parliamentary Salary in Nigeria, Again," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified March 20, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/uproar-over-parliamentary-salaries-nigeria-again>.

¹⁷⁷ OXFAM International "inequality."

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Provide 1,876 water points in all of Nigeria's 774 local government areas and address the needs of about 500 households with a ceiling of 7 members in each household per water point, providing 6.5million people with access to potable water.¹⁷⁹

Yet, these monies are spent on the same greedy politicians who have impoverished the nation and who have stored up riches for themselves and their great-grandchildren for years to come. No nation on earth can become economically sustainable with such financial hemorrhage.

This is an injury to the poor, a flagrant abuse of the common good and a blatant refusal to be in solidarity with the vast population of Nigerians. For Nigeria to be economically prosperous, her leaders must discern the common good of all its citizens and seek to meet them. CST invites the affluent members of the society and the political leaders to first recognize the poor Nigerian as their brothers and sisters and in true solidarity be more sensitive to the biting conditions that they face daily. Humanity is community and even more so, in Nigeria where the virtue of communality is prized, leaders ought to be in “communion” with fellow Nigerians.

Apart from the intra-solidarity between the rich and the poor in Nigeria, there is also the need for global solidarity. It is a self-evident fact today that no country can survive by themselves. The world today has not only become a global village but also one large living room. For Nigeria to achieve her goal of economic development, the international community must be willing to collaborate with the genuine efforts by well-meaning government functionaries to curb and discourage practices and actions that lead to the impoverishment of the citizens. In many of the cases involving massive looting in Nigeria, the culprits were not alone; they were aided by foreign financial institutions who make their countries safe havens for stolen wealth. In all the cases mentioned above: General Sani Abacha, Mrs. Deziani Madueke, Col. Sambo Dasuki and Mr. James Ibori, there were undeniably a conspiracy between them and banks outside of Nigeria.

In the case of Mr. Ibori for instance, court findings in the United Kingdom show clear

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

evidence of collaboration from some financial institutions. This fact is supported by Robert Palmer, a campaigner with Global Witness, who argues that,

By doing business with Ibori and his associates, these banks facilitated his corrupt behavior and allowed him to spend diverted state assets on a luxury lifestyle, including a private jet and expensive London houses, while many Nigerians continue to live in poverty.¹⁸⁰

Nigeria cannot fight the battle for economic sustainability alone. An active involvement of the international community by way of sanctions against corrupt public officials, prosecutions and convictions of those guilty of laundering Nigerian money will change the trajectory of Nigeria's economy for good.

Therefore, in global solidarity, countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Switzerland, etc can help Nigeria by sending strong signals to kleptocrats that their ill-gotten wealth is not welcomed in their countries. As Andrew Mitchell, the UK International Development secretary once said, speaking about the conviction of Mr. Ibori over his embezzlement of Nigerian money and laundering in the UK:

James Ibori's sentence sends a strong and important message to those who seek to use Britain as a refuge for their crimes... Corruption is a cancer in developing countries and the [UK] coalition government has a zero-tolerance approach to it. We are committed to rooting out corruption wherever it is undermining development, and will help bring its perpetrators like Ibori to justice and return stolen funds to help the world's poorest.¹⁸¹

If every country genuinely interested in the development of Nigeria takes the above position, Nigeria will become a better country with a globally competitive economy in no distant time.

Again, the proposal of Matthew Page for the erection of an inter-agency in Nigeria to monitor US-Nigerian transactions could be a strong sign of global solidarity. He noted:

U.S. policymakers should commit to deterring official corruption in the sectors and institutions in which the United States invests significant attention and resources. At a minimum, this plan should establish an interagency working group on Nigerian kleptocracy, station a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

¹⁸⁰ Tran, "Former Nigeria State Governor."

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

investigator in Abuja, and promulgate an executive order (EO) restricting financial transactions by corrupt Nigerian officials.¹⁸²

It is not enough to send aids to Nigeria, foreign donors must insist on accountability. Such aids must be utilized for the good of the target beneficiaries. This requires some form of monitoring. There is a caveat to this, however. Monitoring in this sense must not snowball into a backdoor imperialism. In global solidarity, foreign corporations must also resist the urge to exploit the porous judicial and executive mechanisms in the country; they must desist from collaborating with corrupt government officials, or compromising the legislative and judicial structures created to protect the interest of the poor and the less privileged.

¹⁸² Council for Foreign Relations, “Improving.”

Conclusion

Nigeria, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, is indubitably a Nation richly endowed with a vast array of potential. From the North to the South, the East to the West, Nigeria can be likened to the Biblical tree that is planted beside the running water. With a population of about 190,000,000 people, and with the huge reserve of oil, natural gas and more recently, with the discovery of gold in the North, Nigeria has the capacity to become the greatest country in the world. Unfortunately, this enviably rich country with boundless natural and human resources has remained a sad tale of a nation impoverished in the midst of abundance, indeed a nation sweating in the rains. This paradox, as I have argued in this thesis, demonstrates that economic sustainability is not achieved by the mere presence of natural and human resources. While the presence of such potential can be a great asset to Nigeria, it is the utilization of such resources for the wellbeing of the Nigerian people that makes Nigeria either economically sustainable or impoverished.

As I have demonstrated, in spite of the enormous natural and human resources, many Nigerians today live beneath the tragic reality of underdevelopment that prevents them from full human flourishing. A vast majority wallow in abject poverty and misery, illness and disease, infant mortality, illiteracy and marginality and of abysmal inequality of income, while an extremely few percent of the populace swim in affluence and scandalous profligacy.

In this thesis I have argued that the colonial configuration of Nigeria, military dictatorships, resource curse, and foreign government and their cronies have contributed to this situation. I have also established that the greatest causal agents responsible for Nigeria's economic woes and which have prevented her from deploying her resources for the common good of the masses, are violent conflicts and ethnocentrism as manifested in a number of isms, such as tribalism, nepotism and sectionalism in the country, but more so, in the evident kleptocratic attitudes of the leaders and those in public service. This thesis has argued very firmly that no nation on Earth can survive, flourish and become economically sustainable in situations of perennial conflicts and under kleptocratic leaders

whose ultimate priority is their stomach and not the common good of the Nigerian society. Any economic plan therefore, that seeks to revamp Nigeria's economic woes and lead to the goal of sustainability must first address the two impoverishing agents of conflict and ethnocentrism. Again, my thesis firmly contended that no economic plan or program for economic growth can succeed in a country that is politically unstable, religiously volatile, ethnically hostile and one whose leaders lack the sense of solidarity with the masses.

As I have shown, previous economic development plans that were touted as the magic wand for Nigeria's socio-economic challenges failed largely because of their lopsided notion of development and their non-prioritization of the greatest capital for development, human capital. As a panacea to the current socio-economic conditions of Nigeria that has become more impoverishing, this thesis has argued that no matter what economic roadmap Nigeria adopts, if such theory does not prioritize the Nigerian, such theory and economic plans is bound to fail.

Catholic social teaching with her corpus of teaching about integral development has numerous insights that are helpful for Nigeria in the area of economic sustainability. And I make bold to say that Catholic social teaching offers a more comprehensive and compelling solution to the question of development in Nigeria. I have established how the CST through her resources on dialogue, peace and solidarity can provide the veritable pathway to economic sustainability in Nigeria.

Dialogue is vital for the dissipation of the acrimonious relationships among the various religions in Nigeria and the different ethnics groups. Through dialogue, Nigeria as a nation can come together for mutual healing and better understanding of the factors that both divide and unite. It is only through this dialogue that peace and solidarity can be attained. Peace is the basis and substructure of genuine development. And just as an elegant superstructure on a faulty substructure is bound to collapse, economic development in Nigeria cannot survive, on a substructure of conflicts and ethnocentrism. Nigeria cannot achieve its destined end if it does not turn the diversity of the

country into assets for economic growth and development. To do this, leaders must be ready to work towards blurring the ethno-religious divides that have continued to become cogs in the wheel of national integrations and economic progress. Today more than ever, all Nigerians must realize that they are linked together by a common destiny, and in solidarity with one another. The joys and the hopes, the anguish and the affliction of everyone must be of interest to all, especially those who have been entrusted with the mandate to serve.

In this thesis, I have demonstrated how Catholic social teaching attends to substantiality in Nigeria: It expresses a more adequate notion of economic development which transcends mere material prosperity to complete human fulfillment, placing the Nigerian at the center of development. Again, I have argued that peace is central to the realization of economic sustainability in Nigeria. The fight against ethnic and religious conflicts must be confronted with an honest dialogue. The roles of the government, religious leaders and the populace are paramount. Finally, instilling the sense of the common good in Nigeria's leaders who often have a kleptocratic approach to the understanding of governance could be the greatest contribution of CST to Nigeria. Given that community is at the heart of the Nigerian culture, the Catholic social principle of solidarity is a powerful tool for redirecting the leaders in Nigeria to be their brothers and sisters' keepers. Thus, to become economically sustainable, Nigeria must invest not only in infrastructure, but ultimately in human and social capital through education in dialogue, peace and solidarity.

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